



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>



U.S. 89.5
aHC

Bd. Aug., 1888.



Harvard College Library

FROM

James Walker
(Class of 1814.)

Jan. 31, 1860.

U.S. 89.5
a HC C

Bd. Aug., 1888.



Harvard College Library

FROM

James Walker.....
(Class of 1814.)

Jan. 31, 1860.

ELOQUENCE
OF
THE UNITED STATES:

COMPILED
BY E. B. WILLISTON.

IN FIVE VOLUMES.
VOL. V.

MIDDLETOWN, CONN.
PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY E. & H. CLARK.
1827.

U.S. 89, 5
AHC C

1860, Jan. 31

DISTRICT OF CONNECTICUT, SS.



BE IT REMEMBERED, That on the seventeenth day of July, in the fifty-second year of the Independence of the United States of America, E. B. WILLISTON, of the said District, hath deposited in this Office, the title of a Book, the right whereof he claims as Author and Proprietor, in the words following—to wit:

"Eloquence of the United States: compiled by E. B. Williston, in five volumes."

In conformity to the Act of Congress of the United States, entitled, "An Act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of Maps, Charts and Books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned."—And also to the Act, entitled, "An Act supplementary to an Act, entitled 'An Act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of Maps, Charts and Books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies during the times therein mentioned,' and extending the benefits thereof to the arts of designing, engraving and etching historical and other prints."

CHA'S A. INGERSOLL,

Clerk of the District of Connecticut.

A true copy of Record, examined and sealed by me,

CHA'S A. INGERSOLL,

Clerk of the District of Connecticut.

CONTENTS OF VOLUME FIFTH.

	Page.
Mr. WARREN's Oration, at Boston, March 5, 1772, in commemoration of the " Boston Massacre," . . .	5
Mr. HANCOCK's Oration, at Boston, March 5, 1774, . . .	17
Mr. WARREN's Oration, at Boston, March 6, 1775, . . .	30
Mr. WILSON's Speech in the Convention for the Province of Pennsylvania, in vindication of the Colonies, January, 1775, . . .	43
Mr. HENRY's Speech in the Convention of Delegates of Virginia, March 23, 1775, . . .	60
Gov. LIVINGSTON's Speech to the Legislature of the State of New Jersey, 1777, . . .	64
The Address of Congress to the Inhabitants of Great Britain, from the pen of Mr. LEE, 1775, . . .	81
Mr. PINKNEY's Speech in the Assembly of Maryland, on a petition for the relief of oppressed slaves, 1788, . . .	92
Mr. ADAMS' Oration, at Boston, July 4, 1793, . . .	99
WASHINGTON's Farewell Address, . . .	110
Mr. LEE's Eulogy on Washington, at Washington, 1799, . . .	129
Mr. AMES' Eulogy on Washington, at Boston, February 8, 1800, . . .	139
Mr. MASON's Eulogy on Washington, at New York, February 20, 1800, . . .	159
Mr. ADAMS' Oration, at Plymouth, in commemoration of the first landing of our ancestors, at that place, December 22, 1802, . . .	173
Mr. OTIS' Eulogy on Hamilton, at Boston, July 26, 1804, . . .	191
Mr. NORR's Discourse on the death of Hamilton, at Albany, July 9, 1804, . . .	207
Mr. RUSH's Oration, at Washington, July 4, 1812, . . .	230

Mr. EVERETT's Oration before the Society of Phi Beta Kappa, at Cambridge, August 26, 1824, . . .	262
Mr. WEBSTER's Address at the laying the corner stone of the Bunker Hill monument, 1825, . . .	299
Mr. SPRAGUE's Oration, at Boston, July 4, 1825, . . .	322
Mr. EVERETT's Oration, at Cambridge, July 4, 1826, . . .	341
Mr. WEBSTER's Eulogy on Adams and Jefferson, at Boston, August 2, 1826, . . .	354
Mr. STORY's Discourse before the Phi Beta Kappa Society, at Cambridge, August 31, 1826, . . .	415
Mr. WIRT's Eulogy on Jefferson and Adams, at Washington, October 19, 1826, . . .	454
Mr. CLINTON's Oration before the New York Alpha of the Phi Beta Kappa Society, at Schenectady, July 22, 1826, . . .	504

ORATION OF JOSEPH WARREN.

DELIVERED

AT BOSTON, MARCH 5, 1772, THE ANNIVERSARY OF
THE "BOSTON MASSACRE."*

• WHEN we turn over the historic page, and trace the rise and fall of states and empires, the mighty revolutions which have so often varied the face of the world strike our minds with solemn surprise, and we are naturally led to endeavor to search out the causes of such astonishing changes.

That man is formed for social life, is an observation, which, upon our first inquiry, presents itself immediately to our view, and our reason approves that wise and generous principle which actuated the first

* The "Boston massacre," as it is generally called, took place March 5, 1770. Previous to this time, considerable animosity had existed between the citizens of Boston and the British soldiers stationed there, which had occasionally shown itself in quarrels and mutual abuse.

On the evening of the 5th of March, an extensive disturbance occurred, in which a number of the citizens lost their lives. This event was productive of the most important consequences. It was every where represented as a cruel and barbarous outrage of an armed soldiery, upon unoffending and unarmed citizens.

It wrought up to the highest pitch the spirit of opposition to the British government, and increased the activity and energy of those who were determined on resistance.

It afforded also, an opportunity for an exhibition of traits of character in the "rebellious colonists," which plainly proved that, with them, the dictates of justice predominated over every other consideration: for the jury who tried the offenders, although burning with resentment for the recent outrage, and incensed at the numerous injuries of the British government, still acquitted all the offenders of the charge of murder. The anniversary of this day was celebrated for a number of years, but at length the practice was discontinued.—COMPILER.

founders of civil government—an institution, which hath its origin in the weakness of individuals, and hath for its end, the strength and security of all: and so long as the means of effecting this important end are thoroughly known, and religiously attended to, government is one of the richest blessings to mankind, and ought to be held in the highest veneration.

In young and new formed communities, the grand design of this institution, is most generally understood, and most strictly regarded. The motives which urged to the social compact, cannot be at once forgotten; and that equality which is remembered to have subsisted so lately among them, prevents those who are clothed with authority, from attempting to invade the freedom of their brethren; or if such an attempt is made, it prevents the community from suffering the offender to go unpunished. Every member feels it to be his interest and knows it to be his duty, to preserve inviolate the constitution on which the public safety depends,* and he is equally ready to assist the magistrate in the execution of the laws, and the subject in defence of his right; and so long as this noble attachment to a constitution, founded on free and benevolent principles, exists in full vigor, in any state, that state must be flourishing and happy.

It was this noble attachment to a free constitution, which raised ancient Rome, from the smallest beginnings, to that bright summit of happiness and glory, to which she arrived; and it was the loss of this which plunged her from that summit into the black gulf of infamy and slavery. It was this attachment which inspired her senators with wisdom; it was this which glowed in the breasts of her heroes; it was this which guarded her liberties and extended her dominions, gave peace at home, and commanded respect abroad. And when this decayed, her magistrates lost their reve-

* *Omnes ordines ad conservandam rempublicam, mente, voluntate, studio, virtute, voce, consentiunt.*—CICERO.

rence for justice and the laws, and degenerated into tyrants and oppressors; her senators, forgetful of their dignity, and seduced by base corruption, betrayed their country; her soldiers, regardless of their relation to the community, and urged only by the hopes of plunder and rapine, unfeelingly committed the most flagrant enormities; and, hired to the trade of death, with relentless fury they perpetrated the most cruel murders, whereby the streets of imperial Rome were drenched with her noblest blood. Thus this empress of the world lost her dominions abroad, and her inhabitants, dissolute in their manners, at length became contented slaves; and she stands, to this day, the scorn and derision of nations, and a monument of this eternal truth, that public happiness depends on a virtuous and unshaken attachment to a free constitution.

It was this attachment to a constitution, founded on free and benevolent principles, which inspired the first settlers of this country. They saw, with grief, the daring outrages committed on the free constitution of their native land; they knew, that nothing but a civil war could, at that time, restore its pristine purity. So hard was it to resolve to imbrue their hands in the blood of their brethren, that they chose rather to quit their fair possessions and seek another habitation in a distant clime. When they came to this new world, which they fairly purchased of the Indian natives, the only rightful proprietors, they cultivated the then barren soil, by their incessant labor, and defended their dear-bought possessions with the fortitude of the christian, and the bravery of the hero.

After various struggles, which, during the tyrannic reigns of the house of Stuart, were constantly kept up between right and wrong, between liberty and slavery, the connexion between Great Britain and this colony was settled in the reign of king William and queen Mary, by a compact, the conditions of which were expressed in a charter; by which all the liberties and immunities of British subjects, were confirmed to this

province, as fully and as absolutely as they possibly could be, by any human instrument, which can be devised. And it is undeniably true, that the greatest and most important right of a British subject is, that he shall be governed by no laws but those to which he either in person, or by his representative, hath given his consent: and this, I will venture to assert, is the grand basis of British freedom; it is interwoven with the constitution; and whenever this is lost, the constitution must be destroyed.

The British constitution, (of which ours is a copy,) is a happy compound of the three forms, (under some of which all governments may be ranged,) viz., monarchy, aristocracy and democracy. Of these three the British legislature is composed, and without the consent of each branch, nothing can carry with it the force of a law. But when a law is to be passed for raising a tax, that law can originate only in the democratic branch, which is the house of commons in Britain, and the house of representatives here. The reason is obvious: they and their constituents are to pay much the largest part of it; but as the aristocratic branch, which, in Britain, is the house of lords, and in this province, the council, are also to pay some part, their consent is necessary; and as the monarchic branch, which, in Britain, is the king, and with us, either the king in person, or the governor whom he shall be pleased to appoint to act in his stead, is supposed to have a just sense of his own interest, which is that of all the subjects in general, his consent is also necessary, and when the consent of these three branches is obtained, the taxation is most certainly legal.

Let us now allow ourselves a few moments to examine the late acts of the British parliament for taxing America. Let us, with candor, judge, whether they are constitutionally binding upon us: if they are, in the name of justice let us submit to them, without one murmuring word.

First, I would ask, whether the members of the Bri-

fish house of commons are the democracy of this province? If they are, they are either the people of this province, or are elected by the people of this province, to represent them, and have, therefore, a constitutional right to originate a bill for taxing them: it is most certain they are neither, and, therefore, nothing done by them can be said to be done by the democratic branch of our constitution. I would next ask, whether the lords, who compose the aristocratic branch of the legislature, are peers of America? I never heard it was, (even in those extraordinary times,) so much as pretended; and if they are not, certainly no act of theirs can be said to be the act of the aristocratic branch of our constitution. The power of the monarchic branch we, with pleasure, acknowledge resides in the king, who may act either in person or by his representative; and I freely confess, that I can see no reason why a proclamation for raising taxes in America, issued by the king's sole authority, would not be equally consistent with our own constitution, and, therefore, equally binding upon us, with the late acts of the British parliament for taxing us; for it is plain, that if there is any validity in those acts, it must arise altogether from the monarchical branch of the legislature. And I further think, that it would be at least as equitable; for I do not conceive it to be of the least importance to us, by whom our property is taken away, so long as it is taken without our consent; and I am very much at a loss to know, by what figure of rhetoric, the inhabitants of this province can be called free subjects, when they are obliged to obey, implicitly, such laws as are made for them by men three thousand miles off, whom they know not, and whom they never empowered to act for them; or how they can be said to have property, when a body of men, over whom they have not the least control, and who are not in any way accountable to them, shall oblige them to deliver up any part, or the whole of their substance, without even asking their consent. And yet, whoever

pretends, that the late acts of the British parliament, for taxing America, ought to be deemed binding upon us, must admit, at once, that we are absolute slaves, and have no property of our own; or else, that we may be freemen, and, at the same time, under a necessity of obeying the arbitrary commands of those over whom we have no control or influence, and that we may have property of our own, which is entirely at the disposal of another. Such gross absurdities, I believe, will not be relished in this enlightened age: and it can be no matter of wonder, that the people quickly perceived, and seriously complained of, the inroads which these acts must unavoidably make upon their liberty, and of the hazard to which their whole property is by them exposed. For, if they may be taxed without their consent, even in the smallest trifle, they may also, without their consent, be deprived of every thing they possess, although never so valuable, never so dear. Certainly it never entered the hearts of our ancestors, that, after so many dangers in this then desolate wilderness, their hard-earned property should be at the disposal of the British parliament. And as it was soon found, that this taxation could not be supported by reason and argument, it seemed necessary, that one act of oppression should be enforced by another, and, therefore, contrary to our just rights as possessing, or at least having a just title to possess, all the liberties and immunities of British subjects, a standing army was established among us, in time of peace; and evidently for the purpose of effecting that, which it was one principal design of the founders of the constitution to prevent, (when they declared a standing army, in time of peace, to be against law,) namely, for the enforcement of obedience to acts, which, upon fair examination, appeared to be unjust and unconstitutional.

The ruinous consequences of standing armies to free communities, may be seen in the histories of Syracuse, Rome and many other once flourishing states;

some of which have now scarce a name! Their baneful influence is most suddenly felt, when they are placed in populous cities: for, by a corruption of morals, the public happiness is immediately affected; and that this is one of the effects of quartering troops in a populous city, is a truth, to which many a mourning parent, many a lost, despairing child in this metropolis, must bear a very melancholy testimony. Soldiers are also taught to consider arms as the only arbiters by which every dispute is to be decided between contending states; they are instructed implicitly to obey their commanders, without inquiring into the justice of the cause they are engaged to support: hence it is, that they are ever to be dreaded as the ready engines of tyranny and oppression. And it is too observable, that they are prone to introduce the same mode of decision in the disputes of individuals; and from thence have often arisen great animosities between them and the inhabitants, who, whilst in a naked, defenceless state, are frequently insulted and abused by an armed soldiery. And this will be more especially the case, when the troops are informed that the intention of their being stationed in any city, is to overawe the inhabitants. That this was the avowed design of stationing an armed force in this town, is sufficiently known; and we, my fellow-citizens, have seen, we have felt the tragical effects!—the fatal fifth of March, 1770, can never be forgotten. The horrors of that dreadful night, are but too deeply impressed on our hearts. Language is too feeble to paint the emotion of our souls, when our streets were stained with the blood of our brethren; when our ears were wounded by the groans of the dying, and our eyes were tormented with the sight of the mangled bodies of the dead; when our alarmed imagination presented to our views our houses wrapped in flames, our children subjected to the barbarous caprice of the raging soldiery, our beauteous virgins exposed to all the insolence of unbridled passion, our virtuous wives, endeared to us by

every tender tie, falling a sacrifice to worse than brutal violence, and perhaps, like the famed Lucretia, distracted with anguish and despair, ending their wretched lives by their own fair hands. When we beheld the authors of our distress parading in our streets, or drawn up in a regular *battalia*, as though in a hostile city, our hearts beat to arms; we snatched our weapons, almost resolved, by one decisive stroke, to avenge the death of our slaughtered brethren, and to secure from future danger, all that we held most dear. But propitious heaven forbade the bloody carnage, and saved the threatened victims of our too keen resentment—not by their discipline, not by their regular array; no, it was royal George's livery that proved their shield—it was that which turned the pointed engines of destruction from their breasts. The thoughts of vengeance were soon buried in our inbred affection to Great Britain, and calm reason dictated a method of removing the troops more mild than an immediate recourse to the sword. With united efforts you urged the immediate departure of the troops from the town; you urged it, with a resolution which ensured success; you obtained your wishes, and the removal of the troops was effected, without one drop of their blood being shed by the inhabitants.

The immediate actors in the tragedy of that night, were surrendered to justice. It is not mine to say how far they were guilty. They have been tried by the country and acquitted of murder! and they are not to be again arraigned at an earthly bar. But surely the men who have promiscuously scattered death amidst the innocent inhabitants of a populous city, ought to see well to it, that they be prepared to stand at the bar of an omniscient judge! and all who contrived or encouraged the stationing troops in this place, have reasons of eternal importance, to reflect with deep contrition, on their base designs, and humbly to repent of their impious machinations.

The infatuation which hath seemed, for a number

of years, to prevail in the British councils, with regard to us, is truly astonishing! What can be proposed by the repeated attacks made upon our freedom, I really cannot surmise: even leaving justice and humanity out of question. I do not know one single advantage, which can arise to the British nation, from our being enslaved. I know not of any gains, which can be wrung from us by oppression, which they may not obtain from us by our own consent, in the smooth channel of commerce. We wish the wealth and prosperity of Britain; we contribute largely to both. Doth what we contribute lose all its value, because it is done voluntarily? The amazing increase of riches to Britain, the great rise of the value of her lands, the flourishing state of her navy, are striking proofs of the advantages derived to her from her commerce with the colonies; and it is our earnest desire that she may still continue to enjoy the same emoluments, until her streets are paved with American gold; only, let us have the pleasure of calling it our own, whilst it is in our own hands. But this, it seems, is too great a favor; we are to be governed by the absolute command of others; our property is to be taken away without our consent; if we complain, our complaints are treated with contempt; if we assert our rights, that assertion is deemed insolence; if we humbly offer to submit the matter to the impartial decision of reason, the sword is judged the most proper argument to silence our murmurs! But this cannot long be the case: surely the British nation will not suffer the reputation of their justice and their honor, to be thus sported away by a capricious ministry. No, they will in a short time open their eyes to their true interest; they nourish in their own breasts, a noble love of liberty; they hold her dear, and they know that all, who have once possessed her charms, had rather die than suffer her to be torn from their embraces. They are also sensible that Britain is so deeply interested in the prosperity of the colonies, that she must eventually feel every wound

given to their freedom; they cannot be ignorant that more dependence may be placed on the affections of a brother, than on the forced service of a slave: they must approve your efforts for the preservation of your rights; from a sympathy of soul they must pray for your success; and I doubt not but they will, ere long, exert themselves effectually, to redress your grievances. Even in the dissolute reign of king Charles II. when the house of commons impeached the earl of Clarendon, of high treason, the first article on which they founded their accusation was, that "he had designed a standing army to be raised, and to govern the kingdom thereby." And the eighth article was, that "he had introduced an arbitrary government into his majesty's plantation." A terrifying example to those who are now forging chains for this country.

You have, my friends and countrymen, frustrated the designs of your enemies, by your unanimity and fortitude: it was your union and determined spirit which expelled those troops, who polluted your streets with innocent blood. You have appointed this anniversary as a standard memorial of the bloody consequences of placing an armed force in a populous city, and of your deliverance from the dangers which then seemed to hang over your heads; and I am confident that you never will betray the least want of spirit when called upon to guard your freedom. None but they, who set a just value upon the blessings of liberty, are worthy to enjoy her—your illustrious fathers were her zealous votaries—when the blasting frowns of tyranny drove her from public view, they clasped her in their arms; they cherished her in their generous bosoms; they brought her safe over the rough ocean, and fixed her seat in this then dreary wilderness; they nursed her infant age with the most tender care; for her sake, they patiently bore the severest hardships; for her support, they underwent the most rugged toils; in her defence, they boldly encountered the most alarming dangers; neither the ravenous beasts that ranged the

woods for prey, nor the more furious savages of the wilderness, could damp their ardor! Whilst with one hand they broke the stubborn glebe, with the other they grasped their weapons, ever ready to protect her from danger. No sacrifice, not even their own blood, was esteemed too rich a libation for her altar! God prospered their valor; they preserved her brilliancy unsullied; they enjoyed her whilst they lived, and dying, bequeathed the dear inheritance to your care. And as they left you this glorious legacy, they have undoubtedly transmitted to you some portion of their noble spirit, to inspire you with virtue to merit her, and courage to preserve her. You surely cannot, with such examples before your eyes, as every page of the history of this country affords,* suffer your liberties to be ravished from you by lawless force, or cajoled away by flattery and fraud.

The voice of your father's blood cries to you from the ground, my sons scorn to be slaves! In vain we met the frowns of tyrants—in vain we crossed the boisterous ocean, found a new world, and prepared it for the happy residence of liberty—in vain we toiled—in vain we fought—we bled in vain, if you, our offspring, want valor to repel the assaults of her invaders! Stain not the glory of your worthy ancestors, but like them, resolve never to part with your birth-right; be wise in your deliberations, and determined in your exertions for the preservation of your liberties. Follow not the dictates of passion, but enlist yourselves under the sacred banner of reason; use every method in your power to secure your rights; at least prevent the curses of posterity from being heaped upon your memories.

If you, with united zeal and fortitude, oppose the torrent of oppression; if you feel the true fire of patriotism burning in your breasts: if you, from your

* At simul heroum laudes, et facta parentis
Jam legere, et quæ sit poteris cognoscere virtus.—*Virg.*



souls, despise the most gaudy dress that slavery can wear; if you really prefer the lonely cottage, (whilst blest with liberty,) to gilded palaces, surrounded with the ensigns of slavery, you may have the fullest assurance that tyranny, with her whole accursed train, will hide their hideous heads in confusion, shame and despair. If you perform your part, you must have the strongest confidence, that the same Almighty Being who protected your pious and venerable forefathers, who enabled them to turn a barren wilderness into a fruitful field, who so often made bare his arm for their salvation, will still be mindful of you, their offspring.

May this Almighty Being, graciously preside in all our councils. May he direct us to such measures as he himself shall approve, and be pleased to bless. May we ever be a people favored of God. May our land be a land of liberty, the seat of virtue, the asylum of the oppressed, a name and a praise in the whole earth, until the last shock of time shall bury the empires of the world in one common undistinguished ruin!

ORATION OF JOHN HANCOCK,

DELIVERED

AT BOSTON, MARCH 5, 1774, THE ANNIVERSARY OF
THE "BOSTON MASSACRE."*

Men, Brethren, Fathers and Fellow-Countrymen,

THE attentive gravity, the venerable appearance of this crowded audience; the dignity which I behold in the countenances of so many in this great assembly; the solemnity of the occasion upon which we have met together, joined to a consideration of the part I am to take in the important business of this day, fill me with an awe hitherto unknown, and heighten the sense which I have ever had, of my unworthiness to fill this sacred desk. But, allured by the call of some of my respected fellow-citizens, with whose request it is always my greatest pleasure to comply, I almost forgot my want of ability to perform what they required. In this situation I find my only support, in assuring myself that a generous people will not severely censure what they know was well intended, though its want of merit should prevent their being able to applaud it. And I pray that my sincere attachment to the interest of my country, and hearty detestation of every design formed against her liberties, may be admitted as some apology for my appearance in this place.

I have always, from my earliest youth, rejoiced in the felicity of my fellow-men; and have ever considered it as the indispensable duty of every member of society to promote, as far as in him lies, the prosperity of every individual, but more especially of the community to which he belongs; and also, as a faithful subject of the state, to use his utmost endeavors to de-

* See page 5th.

tect, and having detected, strenuously to oppose every traitorous plot which its enemies may devise for its destruction. Security to the persons and properties of the governed, is so obviously the design and end of civil government, that to attempt a logical proof of it, would be like burning tapers at noonday, to assist the sun in enlightening the world; and it cannot be either virtuous or honorable, to attempt to support a government, of which this is not the great and principal basis; and it is to the last degree vicious and infamous to attempt to support a government which manifestly tends to render the persons and properties of the governed insecure. Some boast of being friends to government; I am a friend to righteous government, to a government founded upon the principles of reason and justice; but I glory in publicly avowing my eternal enmity to tyranny. Is the present system, which the British administration have adopted for the government of the colonies, a righteous government—or is it tyranny? Here suffer me to ask, (and would to heaven there could be an answer,) what tenderness, what regard, respect or consideration has Great Britain shown, in their late transactions, for the security of the persons or properties of the inhabitants of the colonies? Or rather what have they omitted doing to destroy that security? They have declared, that they have ever had, and of right ought ever to have, full power to make laws of sufficient validity to bind the colonies in all cases whatever. They have exercised this pretended right by imposing a tax upon us without our consent; and lest we should show some reluctance at parting with our property, her fleets and armies are sent to enforce their mad pretensions. The town of Boston, ever faithful to the British crown, has been invested by a British fleet: the troops of George the III. have crossed the wide Atlantic, not to engage an enemy, but to assist a band of traitors in trampling on the rights and liberties of his most loyal subjects in America—those rights and liberties which, as a father, he ought ever to regard, and as a king, he is bound, in

honor, to defend from violation, even at the risk of his own life.

Let not the history of the illustrious house of Brunswick inform posterity, that a king, descended from that glorious monarch, George the II., once sent his British subjects to conquer and enslave his subjects in America. But be perpetual infamy entailed upon that villain who dared to advise his master to such execrable measures; for it was easy to foresee the consequences which so naturally followed upon sending troops into America, to enforce obedience to acts of the British parliament, which neither God nor man ever empowered them to make. (It was reasonable to expect, that troops, who knew the errand they were sent upon, would treat the people whom they were to subjugate, with a cruelty and haughtiness, which too often buries the honorable character of a soldier, in the disgraceful name of an unfeeling ruffian. The troops, upon their first arrival, took possession of our senate-house, and pointed their cannon against the judgment-hall, and even continued them there whilst the supreme court of judicature for this province was actually sitting to decide upon the lives and fortunes of the king's subjects. Our streets nightly resounded with the noise of riot and debauchery; our peaceful citizens were hourly exposed to shameful insults, and often felt the effects of their violence and outrage.) But this was not all: as though they thought it not enough to violate our civil rights, they endeavored to deprive us of the enjoyment of our religious privileges; to viciate our morals, and thereby render us deserving of destruction. Hence the rude din of arms which broke in upon your solemn devotions in your temples, on that day hallowed by heaven, and set apart by God himself for his peculiar worship. Hence, impious oaths and blasphemies so often tortured your unaccustomed ear. Hence, all the arts which idleness and luxury could invent, were used to betray our youth of one sex into extravagance and effeminacy, and of the

other, to infamy and ruin; and did they not succeed but too well? Did not a reverence for religion sensibly decay? Did not our infants almost learn to lisp out curses before they knew their horrid import? Did not our youth forget they were Americans, and regardless of the admonitions of the wise and aged, servilely copy from their tyrants those vices which finally must overthrow the empire of Great Britain? And must I be compelled to acknowledge, that even the noblest, fairest part of all the lower creation, did not entirely escape the cursed snare? When virtue has once erected her throne within the female breast, it is upon so solid a basis that nothing is able to expel the heavenly inhabitant. But have there not been some, few indeed, I hope, whose youth and inexperience have rendered them a prey to wretches, whom, upon the least reflection, they would have despised and hated as foes to God and their country? I fear there have been some such unhappy instances, or why have I seen an honest father clothed with shame; or why a virtuous mother drowned in tears?

But I forbear, and come reluctantly to the transactions of that dismal night, when in such quick succession we felt the extremes of grief, astonishment and rage; when heaven in anger, for a dreadful moment, suffered hell to take the reins; when satan with his chosen band opened the sluices of New England's blood, and sacrilegiously polluted our land with the dead bodies of her guiltless sons! Let this sad tale of death never be told without a tear: let not the heaving bosom cease to burn with a manly indignation at the barbarous story, through the long tracts of future time: let every parent tell the shameful story to his listening children until tears of pity glisten in their eyes and boiling passions shake their tender frames; and whilst the anniversary of that ill-fated night is kept a jubilee in the grim court of pandæmonium, let all America join in one common prayer to heaven, that the inhuman, unprovoked murders of the fifth of

March, 1770, planned by Hillsborough, and a knot of treacherous knaves in Boston, and executed by the cruel hand of Preston and his sanguinary coadjutors, may ever stand on history without a parallel. (But what, my countrymen, withheld the ready arm of vengeance from executing instant justice on the vile assassins? Perhaps you feared promiscuous carnage might ensue, and that the innocent might share the fate of those who had performed the infernal deed. But were not all guilty? Were you not too tender of the lives of those who came to fix a yoke on your necks? But I must not too severely blame a fault, which great souls only can commit. May that magnificence of spirit which scorns the low pursuits of malice, may that generous compassion which often preserves from ruin, even a guilty villain, forever actuate the noble bosoms of Americans!! But let not the miscreant host vainly imagine that we feared their arms. No; them we despised; we dread nothing but slavery. Death is the creature of a poltroon's brains; 'tis immortality to sacrifice ourselves for the salvation of our country. We fear not death. That gloomy night, the palefaced moon, and the affrighted stars that hurried through the sky, can witness that we fear not death. Our hearts which, at the recollection, glow with rage that four revolving years have scarcely taught us to restrain, can witness that we fear not death; and happy it is for those who dared to insult us, that their naked bones are not now piled up an everlasting monument of Massachusetts' bravery. But they retired, they fled, and in that flight they found their only safety. We then expected that the hand of public justice would soon inflict that punishment upon the murderers, which, by the laws of God and man, they had incurred. But let the unbiassed pen of a Robertson, or perhaps of some equally famed American, conduct this trial before the great tribunal of succeeding generations. And though the murderers may escape the just resentment of an enraged people; though

drowsy justice, intoxicated by the poisonous draught prepared for her cup, still nods upon her rotten seat, yet be assured, such complicated crimes will meet their due reward. Tell me, ye bloody butchers! ye villains high and low! ye wretches who contrived, as well as you who executed the inhuman deed! do you not feel the goads and stings of conscious guilt pierce through your savage bosoms? Though some of you may think yourselves exalted to a height that bids defiance to human justice; and others shroud yourselves beneath the mask of hypocrisy, and build your hopes of safety on the low arts of cunning, chicanery and falsehood; yet do you not sometimes feel the gnawings of that worm which never dies? Do not the injured shades of Maverick, Gray, Caldwell, Attucks and Carr, attend you in your solitary walks; arrest you even in the midst of your debaucheries, and fill even your dreams with terror? But if the unappeased ~~manes~~ of the dead should not disturb their murderers, yet surely even your obdurate hearts must shrink, and your guilty blood must chill within your rigid veins, when you behold the miserable Monk, the wretched victim of your savage cruelty. Observe his tottering knees, which scarce sustain his wasted body; look on his haggard eyes; mark well the death-like paleness on his fallen cheek, and tell me, does not the sight plant daggers in your souls? Unhappy Monk! cut off, in the gay morn of manhood, from all the joys which sweeten life, doomed to drag on a pitiful existence, without even a hope to taste the pleasures of returning health! Yet Monk, thou livest not in vain; thou livest a warning to thy country, which sympathizes with thee in thy sufferings; thou livest an affecting, an alarming instance of the unbounded violence which lust of power, assisted by a standing army, can lead a traitor to commit.

For us he bled, and now languishes. The wounds, by which he is tortured to a lingering death, were aimed at our country! Surely the meek-eyed charity can never behold such sufferings with indifference. Nor

can her lenient hand forbear to pour oil and wine into these wounds, and to assuage, at least, what it cannot heal.

Patriotism is ever united with humanity and compassion. This noble affection, which impels us to sacrifice every thing dear, even life itself, to our country, involves in it a common sympathy and tenderness for every citizen, and must ever have a particular feeling for one who suffers in a public cause. Thoroughly persuaded of this, I need not add a word to engage your compassion and bounty towards a fellow-citizen, who, with long protracted anguish, falls a victim to the relentless rage of our common enemies.

Ye dark designing knaves, ye murderers, parricides ! how dare you tread upon the earth, which has drank in the blood of slaughtered innocents, shed by your wicked hands ? How dare you breathe that air which wafted to the ear of heaven the groans of those who fell a sacrifice to your accursed ambition ? But if the laboring earth doth not expand her jaws ; if the air you breathe is not commissioned to be the minister of death ; yet, hear it and tremble ! The eye of heaven penetrates the darkest chambers of the soul, traces the leading clue through all the labyrinths which your industrious folly has devised ; and you, however you may have screened yourselves from human eyes, must be arraigned, must lift your hands, red with the blood of those whose death you have procured, at the tremendous bar of God !

But I gladly quit the gloomy theme of death, and leave you to improve the thought of that important day, when our naked souls must stand before that Being, from whom nothing can be hid. I would not dwell too long upon the horrid effects which have already followed from quartering regular troops in this town. Let our misfortunes teach posterity to guard against such evils for the future. Standing armies are sometimes, (I would by no means say generally, much less universally,) composed of persons who have rendered

themselves unfit to live in civil society; who have no other motives of conduct than those which a desire of the present gratification of their passions suggests; who have no property in any country; men who have given up their own liberties, and envy those who enjoy liberty; who are equally indifferent to the glory of a George or a Louis; who, for the addition of one penny a day to their wages, would desert from the Christian cross, and fight under the crescent of the Turkish sultan. From such men as these, what has not a state to fear? With such as these, usurping Cæsar passed the Rubicon; with such as these, he humbled mighty Rome, and forced the mistress of the world to own a master in a traitor. These are the men whom sceptered robbers now employ to frustrate the designs of God, and render vain the bounties which his gracious hand pours indiscriminately upon his creatures. By these, the miserable slaves in Turkey, Persia, and many other extensive countries, are rendered truly wretched, though their air is salubrious, and their soil luxuriously fertile. By these, France and Spain, though blessed by nature with all that administers to the convenience of life, have been reduced to that contemptible state in which they now appear; and by these, Britain——but if I was possessed of the gift of prophecy, I dare not, except by divine command, unfold the leaves on which the destiny of that once powerful kingdom is inscribed.

But since standing armies are so hurtful to a state, perhaps my countrymen may demand some substitute, some other means of rendering us secure against the incursions of a foreign enemy. But can you be one moment at a loss? Will not a well disciplined militia afford you ample security against foreign foes? We want not courage; it is discipline alone in which we are exceeded by the most formidable troops that ever trod the earth. Surely our hearts flutter no more at the sound of war, than did those of the immortal band of Persia, the Macedonian phalanx, the invincible

Roman legions, the Turkish janissaries, the *gens d'armes* of France, or the well known grenadiers of Britain. A well disciplined militia is a safe, an honorable guard to a community like this, whose inhabitants are by nature brave, and are laudably tenacious of that freedom in which they were born. From a well regulated militia, we have nothing to fear; their interest is the same with that of the state. When a country is invaded, the militia are ready to appear in its defence; they march into the field with that fortitude which a consciousness of the justice of their cause inspires; they do not jeopard their lives for a master who considers them only as the instruments of his ambition, and whom they regard only as the daily dispenser of the scanty pittance of bread and water. No, they fight for their houses, their lands, for their wives, their children; for all who claim the tenderest names, and are held dearest in their hearts; they fight *pro aris et focis*, for their liberty, and for themselves, and for their God. And let it not offend, if I say, that no militia ever appeared in more flourishing condition, than that of this province now doth; and pardon me if I say, of this town in particular. I mean not to boast; I would not excite envy but manly emulation. We have all one common cause; let it, therefore, be our only contest, who shall most contribute to the security of the liberties of America. And may the same kind Providence which has watched over this country from her infant state, still enable us to defeat our enemies. I cannot here forbear noticing the signal manner in which the designs of those, who wish not well to us, have been discovered. The dark deeds of a treacherous cabal, have been brought to public view. You now know the serpents who, whilst cherished in your bosoms, were darting their envenomed stings into the vitals of the constitution. But the representatives of the people have fixed a mark on these ungrateful monsters, which, though it may not make them so secure as Cain of old, yet renders them at least as infamous.

Indeed, it would be affrontive to the tutelar deity of this country, even to despair of saving it from all the snares which human policy can lay.

True it is, that the British ministry have annexed a salary to the office of the governor of this province, to be paid out of a revenue, raised in America, without our consent. They have attempted to render our courts of justice the instruments of extending the authority of acts of the British parliament over this colony, by making the judges dependent on the British administration for their support. But this people will never be enslaved with their eyes open. The moment they knew that the governor was not such a governor as the charter of the province points out, he lost his power of hurting them. They were alarmed; they suspected him, have guarded against him, and he has found that a wise and a brave people, when they know their danger, are fruitful in expedients to escape it.

The courts of judicature, also, so far lost their dignity, by being supposed to be under an undue influence, that our representatives thought it absolutely necessary to resolve that they were bound to declare, that they would not receive any other salary besides that which the general court should grant them; and if they did not make this declaration, that it would be the duty of the house to impeach them.

Great expectations were also formed from the artful scheme of allowing the East India company to export tea to America, upon their own account. This certainly, had it succeeded, would have effected the purpose of the contrivers, and gratified the most sanguine wishes of our adversaries. We soon should have found our trade in the hands of foreigners, and taxes imposed on every thing which we consumed; nor would it have been strange, if, in a few years, a company in London should have purchased an exclusive right of trading to America. But their plot was soon discovered. The people soon were aware of the poi-

son which, with so much craft and subtilty, had been concealed. Loss and disgrace ensued: and, perhaps this long concerted master-piece of policy, may issue in the total disuse of tea in this country, which will eventually be the saving of the lives and the estates of thousands. Yet while we rejoice that the adversary has not hitherto prevailed against us, let us by no means put off the harness. Restless malice, and disappointed ambition will still suggest new measures to our inveterate enemies. Therefore, let us also be ready to take the field whenever danger calls; let us be united and strengthen the hands of each other by promoting a general union among us. Much has been done by the committees of correspondence for this and the other towns of this province, towards uniting the inhabitants; let them still go on and prosper. Much has been done by the committees of correspondence, for the houses of assembly, in this and our sister colonies, for uniting the inhabitants of the whole continent, for the security of their common interest. May success ever attend their generous endeavors. But permit me here to suggest a general congress of deputies, from the several houses of assembly, on the continent, as the most effectual method of establishing such an union, as the present posture of our affairs require. At such a congress, a firm foundation may be laid for the security of our rights and liberties; a system may be formed for our common safety, by a strict adherence to which, we shall be able to frustrate any attempts to overthrow our constitution; restore peace and harmony to America, and secure honor and wealth to Great Britain, even against the inclinations of her ministers, whose duty it is to study her welfare; and we shall also free ourselves from those unmannerly pillagers who impudently tell us, that they are licensed by an act of the British parliament, to thrust their dirty hands into the pockets of every American. But, I trust, the happy time will come, when, with the besom of destruction, those noxious vermin will be swept forever from the streets of Boston.

Surely you never will tamely suffer this country to be a den of thieves. Remember, my friends, from whom you sprang. Let not a meanness of spirit, unknown to those whom you boast of as your fathers, excite a thought to the dishonor of your mothers. I conjure you, by all that is dear, by all that is honorable, by all that is sacred, not only that ye pray, but that ye act; that, if necessary, ye fight, and even die, for the prosperity of our Jerusalem. Break in sunder, with noble disdain, the bonds with which the Philistines have bound you. Suffer not yourselves to be betrayed, by the soft arts of luxury and effeminacy, into the pit digged for your destruction. Despise the glare of wealth. That people, who pay greater respect to a wealthy villain, than to an honest, upright man in poverty, almost deserve to be enslaved; they plainly show, that wealth, however it may be acquired, is, in their esteem, to be preferred to virtue.

But I thank God, that America abounds in men who are superior to all temptation, whom nothing can divert from a steady pursuit of the interest of their country; who are at once its ornament and safeguard. And sure I am, I should not incur your displeasure, if I paid a respect, so justly due to their much honored characters, in this place. But when I name an Adams, such a numerous host of fellow-patriots rush upon my mind, that I fear it would take up too much of your time, should I attempt to call over the illustrious roll. But your grateful hearts will point you to the men; and their revered names, in all succeeding times, shall grace the annals of America. From them, let us, my friends, take example; from them, let us catch the divine enthusiasm; and feel, each for himself, the god-like pleasure of diffusing happiness on all around us; of delivering the oppressed from the iron grasp of tyranny; of changing the hoarse complaints and bitter moans of wretched slaves into those cheerful songs, which freedom and contentment must inspire. There is a heartfelt satisfaction in reflecting on our exertions for the public weal, which all the sufferings an enrag-

ed tyrant can inflict, will never take away; which the ingratitude and reproaches of those whom we have saved from ruin, cannot rob us of. The virtuous asserter of the rights of mankind merits a reward, which even a want of success in his endeavors to save his country, the heaviest misfortune which can befall a genuine patriot, cannot entirely prevent him from receiving.

I have the most animating confidence, that the present noble struggle for liberty; will terminate gloriously for America. And let us play the man for our God, and for the cities of our God; while we are using the means in our power, let us humbly commit our righteous cause to the great Lord of the universe, who loveth righteousness and hateth iniquity. And having secured the approbation of our hearts, by a faithful and unwearied discharge of our duty to our country, let us joyfully leave our concerns in the hands of Him who raiseth up and putteth down the empires and kingdoms of the world as He pleases; and with cheerful submission to His sovereign will, devoutly say, "Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labor of the olive shall fail, and the field shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls; yet we will rejoice in the Lord, we will joy in the God of our salvation."

ORATION OF JOSEPH WARREN,

DELIVERED

AT BOSTON, MARCH 6, 1775, IN COMMEMORATION OF
THE "BOSTON MASSACRE."*



MY EVER HONORED FELLOW-CITIZENS,

It is not without the most humiliating conviction of my want of ability, that I now appear before you : but the sense I have of the obligation I am under to obey the calls of my country at all times, together with an animating recollection of your indulgence, exhibited upon so many occasions, has induced me, once more, undeserving as I am, to throw myself upon that candor, which looks with kindness on the feeblest efforts of an honest mind.

You will not now expect the elegance, the learning, the fire, the enrapturing strains of eloquence, which charmed you when a Lovell, a Church, or a Hancock spake ; but you will permit me to say, that with a sincerity equal to theirs, I mourn over my bleeding country. With them I weep at her distress, and with them deeply resent the many injuries she has received from the hands of cruel and unreasonable men.

That personal freedom is the natural right of every man, and that property, or an exclusive right to dispose of what he has honestly acquired by his own labor, necessarily arises therefrom, are truths which common sense has placed beyond the reach of contradiction. And no man or body of men can, without being guilty of flagrant injustice, claim a right to dispose of the persons or acquisitions of any other man, or body of men, unless it can be proved, that such a

* See page 5th.

right has arisen from some compact between the parties, in which it has been explicitly and freely granted.

If I may be indulged in taking a retrospective view of the first settlement of our country, it will be easy to determine with what degree of justice the late parliament of Great Britain have assumed the power of giving away that property, which the Americans have earned by their labor.

Our fathers, having nobly resolved never to wear the yoke of despotism, and seeing the European world, at that time, through indolence and cowardice, falling a prey to tyranny, bravely threw themselves upon the bosom of the ocean, determined to find a place in which they might enjoy their freedom, or perish in the glorious attempt. Approving heaven beheld the favorite ark dancing upon the waves, and graciously preserved it until the chosen families were brought in safety to these western regions. They found the land swarming with savages, who threatened death with every kind of torture. But savages, and death with torture, were far less terrible than slavery. Nothing was so much the object of their abhorrence as a tyrant's power. They knew it was more safe to dwell with man, in his most unpolished state, than in a country where arbitrary power prevails. Even anarchy itself, that bugbear held up by the tools of power, (though truly to be deprecated,) is infinitely less dangerous to mankind than arbitrary government. Anarchy can be but of a short duration; for, when men are at liberty to pursue that course which is more conducive to their own happiness, they will soon come into it; and from the rudest state of nature, order and good government must soon arise. But tyranny, when once established, entails its curses on a nation to the latest period of time; unless some daring genius, inspired by heaven, shall, unappalled by danger, bravely form and execute the arduous design of restoring liberty and life to his enslaved, murdered country.

The tools of power, in every age, have racked their

inventions to justify the few in sporting with the happiness of the many; and, having found their sophistry too weak to hold mankind in bondage, have impiously dared to force religion, the daughter of the King of heaven, to become a prostitute in the service of hell. They taught, that princes, honored with the name of christian, might bid defiance to the founder of their faith, might pillage pagan countries and deluge them with blood, only because they boasted themselves to be the disciples of that teacher, who strictly charged his followers to do to others as they would that others should do unto them.

This country having been discovered by an English subject, in the year 1620, was (according to the system which the blind superstition of those times supported,) deemed the property of the crown of England. Our ancestors, when they resolved to quit their native soil, obtained from king James, a grant of certain lands in North America. This they probably did to silence the cavils of their enemies, for it cannot be doubted, but they despised the pretended right which he claimed thereto. Certain it is, that he might, with equal propriety and justice, have made them a grant of the planet Jupiter. And their subsequent conduct plainly shows, that they were too well acquainted with humanity, and the principles of natural equity, to suppose, that the grant gave them any right to take possession; they, therefore, entered into a treaty with the natives, and bought from them the lands. Nor have I ever yet obtained any information, that our ancestors ever pleaded, or that the natives ever regarded the grant from the English crown: the business was transacted by the parties in the same independent manner, that it would have been, had neither of them ever known or heard of the island of Great Britain.

Having become the honest proprietors of the soil, they immediately applied themselves to the cultivation of it; and they soon beheld the virgin earth teeming with richest fruits, a grateful recompense for their

unwearied toil. The fields began to wave with ripening harvests, and the late barren wilderness was seen to blossom like the rose. The savage natives saw, with wonder, the delightful change, and quickly formed a scheme to obtain that by fraud or force, which nature meant as the reward of industry alone. But the illustrious emigrants soon convinced the rude invaders, that they were not less ready to take the field for battle than for labor; and the insidious foe was driven from their borders as often as he ventured to disturb them. The crown of England looked with indifference on the contest; our ancestors were left alone to combat with the natives. Nor is there any reason to believe, that it ever was intended by the one party, or expected by the other, that the grantor should defend and maintain the grantees in the peaceable possession of the lands named in the patents. And it appears plainly, from the history of those times, that neither the prince nor the people of England, thought themselves much interested in the matter. They had not then any idea of a thousandth part of those advantages, which they since have, and we are most heartily willing they should still continue to reap from us.

But when, at an infinite expense of toil and blood, this widely extended continent had been cultivated and defended; when the hardy adventurers justly expected, that they and their descendants should peaceably have enjoyed the harvest of those fields which they had sown, and the fruit of those vineyards which they had planted, this country was then thought worthy the attention of the British ministry; and the only justifiable and only successful means of rendering the colonies serviceable to Britain, were adopted. By an intercourse of friendly offices, the two countries became so united in affection, that they thought not of any distinct or separate interests, they found both countries flourishing and happy. Britain saw her commerce extended, and her wealth increased; her lands raised to an immense value; her fleets riding

triumphant on the ocean; the terror of her arms spreading to every quarter of the globe. The colonist found himself free, and thought himself secure: he dwelt under his own vine, and under his own fig-tree, and had none to make him afraid. He knew, indeed, that by purchasing the manufactures of Great Britain, he contributed to its greatness: he knew, that all the wealth that his labor produced, centered in Great Britain. But that, far from exciting his envy, filled him with the highest pleasure; that thought supported him in all his toils. When the business of the day was past, he solaced himself with the contemplation, or perhaps entertained his listening family with the recital of some great, some glorious transaction, which shines conspicuous in the history of Britain: or, perhaps, his elevated fancy led him to foretell, with a kind of enthusiastic confidence, the glory, power and duration of an empire which should extend from one end of the earth to the other. He saw, or thought he saw, the British nation risen to a pitch of grandeur, which cast a veil over the Roman glory, and, ravished with the preview, boasted a race of British kings, whose names should echo through those realms where Cyrus, Alexander, and the Cæsars were unknown; princes, for whom millions of grateful subjects redeemed from slavery and pagan ignorance, should, with thankful tongues, offer up their prayers and praises to that transcendently great and beneficent being, "by whom kings reign and princes decree justice."

These pleasing connexions might have continued; these delightful prospects might have been every day extended; and even the reveries of the most warm imagination might have been realized; but, unhappily for us, unhappily for Britain, the madness of an avaricious minister of state, has drawn a sable curtain over the charming scene, and in its stead has brought upon the stage, discord, envy, hatred and revenge, with civil war close in their rear.

Some demon, in an evil hour, suggested to a short-

sighted financier the hateful project of transferring the whole property of the king's subjects in America, to his subjects in Britain. The claim of the British parliament to tax the colonies, can never be supported but by such a transfer; for the right of the house of commons of Great Britain, to originate any tax or grant money, is altogether derived from their being elected by the people of Great Britain to act for them; and the people of Great Britain cannot confer on their representatives a right to give or grant any thing which they themselves have not a right to give or grant personally. Therefore, it follows, that if the members chosen by the people of Great Britain, to represent them in parliament, have, by virtue of their being so chosen, any right to give or grant American property, or to lay any tax upon the lands or persons of the colonists, it is because the lands and people in the colonies are, *bona fide*, owned by, and justly belonging to the people of Great Britain. But, (as has been before observed,) every man has a right to personal freedom; consequently a right to enjoy what is acquired by his own labor. And it is evident, that the property in this country has been acquired by our own labor; it is the duty of the people of Great Britain, to produce some compact in which we have explicitly given up to them a right to dispose of our persons or property. Until this is done, every attempt of theirs, or of those whom they have deputed to act for them, to give or grant any part of our property, is directly repugnant to every principle of reason and natural justice. But I may boldly say, that such a compact never existed, no, not even in imagination. Nevertheless, the representatives of a nation, long famed for justice and the exercise of every noble virtue, have been prevailed on to adopt the fatal scheme; and although the dreadful consequences of this wicked policy have already shaken the empire to its centre, yet still it is persisted in. Regardless of the voice of reason; deaf to the prayers and supplications; and unaffected with the flowing

tears of suffering millions, the British ministry still hug the darling idol; and every rolling year affords fresh instances of the absurd devotion with which they worship it. Alas! how has the folly, the distraction of the British councils, blasted our swelling hopes, and spread a gloom over this western hemisphere.

The hearts of Britons and Americans, which lately felt the generous glow of mutual confidence and love, now burn with jealousy and rage. Though but of yesterday, I recollect (deeply affected at the ill-boding change,) the happy hours that passed whilst Britain and America rejoiced in the prosperity and greatness of each other. Heaven grant those halcyon days may soon return! But now the Briton too often looks on the American with an envious eye, taught to consider his just plea for the enjoyment of his earnings, as the effect of pride and stubborn opposition to the parent country. Whilst the American beholds the Briton, as the ruffian, ready first to take away his property, and next, what is still dearer to every virtuous man, the liberty of his country.

When the measures of administration had disgusted the colonies to the highest degree, and the people of Great Britain had, by artifice and falsehood, been irritated against America, an army was sent over to enforce submission to certain acts of the British parliament, which reason scorned to countenance, and which placemen and pensioners were found unable to support.

Martial law, and the government of a well regulated city, are so entirely different, that it has always been considered as improper to quarter troops in populous cities; frequent disputes must necessarily arise between the citizen and the soldier, even if no previous animosities subsist. And it is further certain, from a consideration of the nature of mankind, as well as from constant experience, that standing armies always endanger the liberty of the subject. But when the people, on the one part, considered the army as sent

to enslave them, and the army, on the other, were taught to look on the people as in a state of rebellion, it was but just to fear the most disagreeable consequences. Our fears, we have seen, were but too well grounded.

The many injuries offered to the town, I pass over in silence. I cannot now mark out the path which led to that unequalled scene of horror, the sad remembrance of which takes the full possession of my soul. The sanguinary theatre again opens itself to view. The baleful images of terror crowd around me; and discontented ghosts, with hollow groans, appear to solemnize the anniversary of the fifth of March.

Approach we then the melancholly walk of death. Hither let me call the gay companion; here let him drop a farewell tear upon that body which so late he saw vigorous and warm with social mirth; hither let me lead the tender mother to weep over her beloved son—come widowed mourner, here satiate thy grief; behold thy murdered husband gasping on the ground, and to complete the pompous show of wretchedness, bring in each hand thy infant children to bewail their father's fate—take heed, ye orphan babes, lest, whilst your streaming eyes are fixed upon the ghastly corpse, your feet slide on the stones bespattered with your father's brains*! Enough; this tragedy need not be heightened by an infant weltering in the blood of him that gave it birth. Nature reluctant, shrinks already from the view, and the chilled blood rolls slowly backward to its fountain. We wildly stare about, and with amazement ask, who spread this ruin round us? What wretch has dared deface the image of his God? Has haughty France, or cruel Spain, sent forth her myrmidons? Has the grim savage rushed again from the far distant wilderness; or does some fiend, fierce from the depth

* After Mr. Gray had been shot through the body, and had fallen dead on the ground, a bayonet was pushed through his skull; part of the bone being broken, his brains fell out upon the pavement.

of hell, with all the rancorous malice which the apostate damned can feel, twang her destructive bow, and hurl her deadly arrows at our breast? No, none of these—but, how astonishing! it is the hand of Britain that inflicts the wound! The arms of George, our rightful king, have been employed to shed that blood, when justice, or the honor of his crown, had called his subjects to the field.

But pity, grief, astonishment, with all the softer movements of the soul, must now give way to stronger passions. Say, fellow-citizens, what dreadful thought now swells your heaving bosoms; you fly to arms—sharp indignation flashes from each eye—revenge gnashes her iron teeth—death grins a hideous smile, secure to drench his greedy jaws in human gore—whilst hovering furies darken all the air!

But stop, my bold adventurous countrymen; stain not your weapons with the blood of Britons. Attend to reason's voice; humanity puts in her claim, and sues to be again admitted to her wonted seat, the bosom of the brave. Revenge is far beneath the noble mind. Many, perhaps, compelled to rank among the vile assassins, do from their inmost souls, detest the barbarous action. The winged death, shot from your arms, may chance to pierce some breast that bleeds already for your injured country.

The storm subsides—a solemn pause ensues—you spare, upon condition they depart. They go—they quit your city—they no more shall give offence. Thus closes the important drama.

And could it have been conceived that we again should have seen a British army in our land, sent to enforce obedience to acts of parliament destructive of our liberty? But the royal ear, far distant from this western world, has been assaulted by the tongue of slander; and villains, traitorous alike to king and country, have prevailed upon a gracious prince to clothe his countenance with wrath, and to erect the hostile banner against a people ever affectionate and loyal to him and his illustrious predecessors of the

House of Hanover. Our streets are again filled with armed men; our harbor is crowded with ships of war; but these cannot intimidate us; our liberty must be preserved; it is far dearer than life, we hold it even dear as our allegiance; we must defend it against the attacks of friends as well as enemies; we cannot suffer even Britons to ravish it from us.

No longer could we reflect with generous pride, on the heroic actions of our American forefathers; no longer boast our origin from that far-famed island, whose warlike sons have so often drawn their well tried swords to save her from the ravages of tyranny; could we, but for a moment, entertain the thought of giving up our liberty. The man who meanly will submit to wear a shackle, contemns the noblest gift of heaven, and impiously affronts the God that made him free.

It was a maxim of the Roman people, which eminently conduced to the greatness of that state, never to despair of the commonwealth. The maxim may prove as salutary to us now, as it did to them. Short-sighted mortals see not the numerous links of small and great events, which form the chain on which the fate of kings and nations is suspended. Ease and prosperity, though pleasing for a day, have often sunk a people into effeminacy and sloth. Hardships and dangers, though we forever strive to shun them, have frequently called forth such virtues, as have commanded the applause and reverence of an admiring world. Our country loudly calls you to be circumspect, vigilant, active and brave. Perhaps, (all gracious heaven avert it,) perhaps, the power of Britain, a nation great in war, by some malignant influence, may be employed to enslave you; but let not even this discourage you. Her arms, 'tis true, have filled the world with terror; her troops have reaped the laurels of the field; her fleets have rode triumphant on the sea; and when, or where, did you, my countrymen, depart inglorious from the field of fight? You too can show the trophies of your forefathers' victories and your own; can name the fortresses and battles you have

won; and many of you count the honorable scars of wounds received, whilst fighting for your king and country.

Where justice is the standard, heaven is the warrior's shield: but conscious guilt unnerves the arm that lifts the sword against the innocent. Britain, united with these colonies by commerce and affection, by interest and blood, may mock the threats of France and Spain; may be the seat of universal empire. But should America, either by force, or those more dangerous engines, luxury and corruption, ever be brought into a state of vassallage, Britain must lose her freedom also. No longer shall she sit the empress of the sea; her ships no more shall waft her thunders over the wide ocean; the wreath shall wither on her temples; her weakened arm shall be unable to defend her coasts; and she at last, must bow her venerable head to some proud foreigner's despotic rule.

But if, from past events, we may venture to form a judgment of the future, we justly may expect that the devices of our enemies will but increase the triumphs of our country. I must indulge a hope that Britain's liberty, as well as ours, will eventually be preserved by the virtue of America.

The attempt of the British parliament to raise a revenue from America, and our denial of their right to do it, have excited an almost universal inquiry into the right of mankind in general, and of British subjects in particular; the necessary result of which, must be such a liberality of sentiment, and such a jealousy of those in power, as will, better than an adamant wall, secure us against the future approaches of despotism.

The malice of the Boston port-bill has been defeated, in a very considerable degree, by giving you an opportunity of deserving, and our brethren in this and our sister colonies, an opportunity of bestowing those benefactions which have delighted your friends and astonished your enemies, not only in America, but in Europe also. And what is more valuable still, the sympathetic feelings for a brother in distress, and the

grateful emotions, excited in the breast of him who finds relief, must forever endear each to the other, and form those indissoluble bonds of friendship and affection, on which the preservation of our rights so evidently depend.

The mutilation of our charter has made every other colony jealous for its own; for this, if once submitted to by us, would set on float the property and government of every British settlement upon the continent. If charters are not deemed sacred, how miserably precarious is every thing founded upon them !

Even the sending troops to put these acts in execution, is not without advantage to us. The exactness and beauty of their discipline inspire our youth with ardor in the pursuit of military knowledge. Charles the invincible, taught Peter the great the art of war. The battle of Pultowa convinced Charles of the proficiency Peter had made.

Our country is in danger, but not to be despaired of. Our enemies are numerous and powerful; but we have many friends, determining to be free, and heaven and earth will aid the resolution. On you depend the fortunes of America. You are to decide the important question, on which rest the happiness and liberty of millions yet unborn. Act worthy of yourselves. The faltering tongue of hoary age, calls on you to support your country. The lisping infant raises its suppliant hands, imploring defence against the monster slavery. Your fathers look from their celestial seats with smiling approbation on their sons, who boldly stand forth in the cause of virtue; but sternly frown upon the inhuman miscreant, who, to secure the loaves and fishes to himself, would breed a serpent to destroy his children.

But, pardon me, my fellow-citizens, I know you want not zeal or fortitude. You will maintain your rights, or perish in the generous struggle. However difficult the combat, you never will decline it when freedom is the prize. An independence of Great Britain is not our aim. No, our wish is, that Britain and the colonies may, like the oak and ivy, grow and increase in

strength together. But whilst the insatuated plan of making one part of the empire slaves to the other is persisted in, the interest and safety of Britain, as well as the colonies, require that the wise measures, recommended by the honorable the continental congress, be steadily pursued; whereby the unnatural contest between a parent honored, and a child beloved, may probably be brought to such an issue, as that the peace and happiness of both may be established upon a lasting basis. But if these pacific measures are ineffectual, and it appears that the only way to safety is through fields of blood, I know you will not turn your faces from your foes, but will, undauntedly, press forward, until tyranny is trodden under foot, and you have fixed your adored goddess liberty, fast by a Brunswick's side, on the American throne.

You then, who nobly have espoused your country's cause, who generously have sacrificed wealth and ease; who have despised the pomp and show of tinselled greatness; refused the summons to the festive board; been deaf to the alluring calls of luxury and mirth; who have forsaken the downy pillow, to keep your vigils by the midnight lamp for the salvation of your invaded country, that you might break the fowler's snare, and disappoint the vulture of his prey—you then will reap that harvest of renown which you so justly have deserved. Your country shall pay her grateful tribute of applause. Even the children of your most inveterate enemies, ashamed to tell from whom they sprang, while they, in secret, curse their stupid, cruel parents, shall join the general voice of gratitude to those who broke the fetters which their father's forged.

Having redeemed your country, and secured the blessing to future generations, who, fired by your example, shall emulate your virtues, and learn from you the heavenly art of making millions happy; with heartfelt joy, with transports all your own, you cry, the glorious work is done; then drop the mantle to some young Elisha, and take your seats with kindred spirits in your native skies!

SPEECH OF JAMES WILSON,

DELIVERED IN JANUARY, 1775,

IN THE CONVENTION FOR THE PROVINCE OF PENNSYLVANIA IN VINDICATION OF THE COLONIES.*



MR. CHAIRMAN,

WHENCE, sir, proceeds all the invidious and ill-grounded clamor against the colonists of America? Why are they stigmatized in Britain, as licentious and ungovernable? Why is their virtuous opposition to the illegal attempts of their governors, represented under the falsest colors, and placed in the most ungracious point of view? This opposition, when exhibited in its true light, and when viewed, with unjaundiced eyes, from a proper situation, and at a proper distance, stands confessed the lovely offspring of freedom. It breathes the spirit of its parent. Of this ethereal spirit, the whole conduct, and particularly the late conduct of the colonists, has shown them eminently possessed. It has animated and regulated every part of their proceedings. It has been recognized to be genuine, by all those symptoms and effects, by which it has been distinguished in other ages and other countries. It has been calm and regular: it has not acted without occasion: it has not acted dispro-

* The king, in his speech at the opening of the British parliament, in November, 1774, informed them, that "a most daring spirit of resistance and disobedience still prevailed in Massachusetts, and had broken forth in fresh violences of a criminal nature; that the most proper and effectual methods had been taken to prevent these mischiefs; and that they, (the parliament,) might depend upon a firm resolution, to withstand every attempt to weaken or impair the supreme authority of parliament, over all the dominions of the crown." It was in reference to this subject, that Mr. Wilson delivered the following speech.—COMPILER.

portionably to the occasion. As the attempts, open or secret, to undermine or to destroy it, have been repeated or enforced; in a just degree, its vigilance and its vigor have been exerted to defeat or to disappoint them. As its exertions have been sufficient for those purposes hitherto, let us hence draw a joyful prognostic, that they will continue sufficient for those purposes hereafter. It is not yet exhausted; it will still operate irresistibly whenever a necessary occasion shall call forth its strength.

Permit me, sir, by appealing, in a few instances, to the spirit and conduct of the colonists, to evince, that what I have said of them is just. Did they disclose any uneasiness at the proceedings and claims of the British parliament, before those claims and proceedings afforded a reasonable cause for it? Did they even disclose any uneasiness, when a reasonable cause for it was first given? Our rights were invaded by their regulations of our internal policy. We submitted to them: we were unwilling to oppose them. The spirit of liberty was slow to act. When those invasions were renewed; when the efficacy and malignancy of them were attempted to be redoubled by the stamp act; when chains were formed for us; and preparations were made for rivetting them on our limbs, what measures did we pursue? The spirit of liberty found it necessary now to act: but she acted with the calmness and decent dignity suited to her character. Were we rash or seditious? Did we discover want of loyalty to our sovereign? Did we betray want of affection to our brethren in Britain? Let our dutiful and reverential petitions to the throne—let our respectful, though firm, remonstrances to the parliament—let our warm and affectionate addresses to our brethren, and (we will still call them,) our friends in Great Britain—let all those, transmitted from every part of the continent, testify the truth. By their testimony let our conduct be tried.

As our proceedings, during the existence and ope-

ration of the stamp act, prove fully and incontestably the painful sensations that tortured our breasts from the prospect of disunion with Britain; the peals of joy, which burst forth universally, upon the repeal of that odious statute, loudly proclaim the heartfelt delight produced in us by a reconciliation with her. Unsuspicious, because undesigning, we buried our complaints and the causes of them, in oblivion, and returned, with eagerness, to our former unreserved confidence. Our connexion with our parent country, and the reciprocal blessings resulting from it to her and to us, were the favorite and pleasing topics of our public discourses and our private conversations. Lulled into delightful security, we dreamed of nothing but increasing fondness and friendship, cemented and strengthened by a kind and perpetual communication of good offices. Soon, however, too soon, were we awakened from the soothing dreams! Our enemies renewed their designs against us, not with less malice, but with more art. Under the plausible pretence of regulating our trade, and, at the same time, of making provision for the administration of justice and the support of government, in some of the colonies, they pursued their scheme of depriving us of our property without our consent. As the attempts to distress us, and to degrade us to a rank inferior to that of freemen, appeared now to be reduced into a regular system, it became proper, on our part, to form a regular system for counteracting them. We ceased to import goods from Great Britain. Was this measure dictated by selfishness or by licentiousness? Did it not injure ourselves, while it injured the British merchants and manufacturers? Was it inconsistent with the peaceful demeanor of subjects to abstain from making purchases, when our freedom and our safety rendered it necessary for us to abstain from them? A regard for our freedom and our safety was our only motive; for no sooner had the parliament, by repealing part of the revenue laws, inspired us with the flattering hopes. that

they had departed from their intentions of oppressing and of taxing us, than we forsook our plan for defeating those intentions, and began to import as formerly. Far from being peevish or captious, we took no public notice even of their declaratory law of dominion over us: our candor led us to consider it as a decent expedient of retreating from the actual exercise of that dominion.

But, alas! the root of bitterness still remained. The duty on tea was reserved to furnish occasion to the ministry for a new effort to enslave and to ruin us; and the East India Company were chosen, and consented to be the detested instruments of ministerial despotism and cruelty. A cargo of their tea arrived at Boston. By a low artifice of the governor, and by the wicked activity of the tools of government, it was rendered impossible to store it up, or to send it back, as was done at other places. A number of persons, unknown, destroyed it.

Let us here make a concession to our enemies: let us suppose, that the transaction deserves all the dark and hideous colors, in which they have painted it: let us even suppose, (for our cause admits of an excess of candor,) that all their exaggerated accounts of it were confined strictly to the truth: what will follow? Will it follow, that every British colony in America, or even the colony of Massachusetts Bay, or even the town of Boston, in that colony, merits the imputation of being factious and seditious? Let the frequent mobs and riots, that have happened in Great Britain upon much more trivial occasions, shame our calumniators into silence. Will it follow, because the rules of order and regular government were, in that instance, violated by the offenders, that, for this reason, the principles of the constitution, and the maxims of justice, must be violated by their punishment? Will it follow, because those who were guilty could not be known, that, therefore, those, who were known not to be guilty, must suffer? Will it follow, that even the guilty should be con-

demned without being heard—that they should be condemned upon partial testimony, upon the representations of their avowed and embittered enemies? Why were they not tried in courts of justice, known to their constitution, and by juries of their neighborhood? Their courts and their juries were not, in the case of captain Preston, transported beyond the bounds of justice by their resentment: why, then, should it be presumed, that, in the case of those offenders, they would be prevented from doing justice by their affection? But the colonists, it seems, must be stripped of their judicial, as well as of their legislative powers. They must be bound by a legislature, they must be tried by a jurisdiction, not their own. Their constitutions must be changed: their liberties must be abridged: and those, who shall be most infamously active in changing their constitutions and abridging their liberties, must, by an express provision, be exempted from punishment.

I do not exaggerate the matter, sir, when I extend these observations to all the colonists. The parliament meant to extend the effects of their proceedings to all the colonists. The plan, on which their proceedings are formed, extends to them all. From an incident of no very uncommon or atrocious nature, which happened in one colony, in one town in that colony, and in which only a few of the inhabitants of that town took a part, an occasion has been taken by those, who probably intended it, and who certainly prepared the way for it, to impose upon that colony, and to lay a foundation and a precedent for imposing upon all the rest, a system of statutes, arbitrary, unconstitutional, oppressive, in every view, and in every degree subversive of the rights, and inconsistent with even the name of freemen.

Were the colonists so blind as not to discern the consequences of these measures? Were they so supinely inactive, as to take no steps for guarding against them? They were not. They ought not to have been so. We saw a breach made in those har-

riers, which our ancestors, British and American, with so much care, with so much danger, with so much treasure, and with so much blood, had erected, cemented and established for the security of their liberties, and—with filial piety let us mention it—of ours. We saw the attack actually begun upon one part: ought we to have folded our hands in indolence, to have lulled our eyes in slumbers, till the attack was carried on, so as to become irresistible, in every part? Sir, I presume to think not. We were roused; we were alarmed, as we had reason to be. But still our measures have been such as the spirit of liberty and of loyalty directed; not such as a spirit of sedition or of disaffection would pursue. Our counsels have been conducted without rashness and faction: our resolutions have been taken without phrensy or fury.

That the sentiments of every individual concerning that important object, his liberty, might be known and regarded, meetings have been held, and deliberations carried on in every particular district. That the sentiments of all those individuals might gradually and regularly be collected into a single point, and the conduct of each inspired and directed by the result of the whole united; county committees, provincial conventions, a continental congress have been appointed, have met and resolved. By this means, a chain—more inestimable, and, while the necessity for it continues, we hope, more indissoluble than one of gold—a chain of freedom has been formed, of which every individual in these colonies, who is willing to preserve the greatest of human blessings, his liberty, has the pleasure of beholding himself a link.

Are these measures, sir, the brats of disloyalty, of disaffection? There are miscreants among us, wasps that suck poison from the most salubrious flowers, who tell us they are. They tell us that all those assemblies are unlawful, and unauthorized by our constitutions; and that all their deliberations and resolutions are so many transgressions of the duty of subjects. The utmost malice brooding over the utmost base-

ness, and nothing but such a hated commixture, must have hatched this calumny. Do not those men know—would they have others not to know—that it was impossible for the inhabitants of the same province, and for the legislatures of the different provinces, to communicate their sentiments to one another in the modes appointed for such purposes, by their different constitutions? Do not they know—would they have others not to know—that all this was rendered impossible by those very persons, who now, or whose minions now, urge this objection against us? Do not they know—would they have others not to know—that the different assemblies, who could be dissolved by the governors, were, in consequence of ministerial mandates, dissolved by them, whenever they attempted to turn their attention to the greatest objects, which, as guardians of the liberty of their constituents, could be presented to their view? The arch enemy of the human race torments them only for those actions, to which he has tempted, but to which he has not necessarily obliged them. Those men refine even upon infernal malice: they accuse, they threaten us, (superlative impudence!) for taking those very steps, which we were laid under the disagreeable necessity of taking by themselves, or by those in whose hateful service they are enlisted. But let them know, that our counsels, our deliberations, our resolutions, if not authorized by the forms, because that was rendered impossible by our enemies, are nevertheless authorized by that which weighs much more in the scale of reason—by the spirit of our constitutions. Was the convention of the barons at Runnymede, where the tyranny of John was checked, and *magna charta* was signed, authorized by the forms of the constitution? Was the convention parliament, that recalled Charles the Second, and restored the monarchy, authorized by the forms of the constitution? Was the convention of lords and commons, that placed king William on the throne, and secured the monarchy and liberty likewise,

authorized by the forms of the constitution? I cannot conceal my emotions of pleasure, when I observe, that the objections of our adversaries cannot be urged against us, but in common with those venerable assemblies, whose proceedings formed such an accession to British liberty and British renown.

The resolutions entered into, and the recommendations given, by the continental congress, have stamped, in the plainest characters, the genuine and enlightened spirit of liberty, upon the conduct observed, and the measures pursued, in consequence of them. As the invasions of our rights have become more and more formidable, our opposition to them has increased in firmness and vigor, in a just, and in no more than a just, proportion. We will not import goods from Great Britain or Ireland: in a little time we will suspend our exportations to them: and, if the same illiberal and destructive system of policy be still carried on against us, in a little time more we will not consume their manufactures. In that colony, where the attacks have been most open, immediate and direct, some further steps have been taken, and those steps have met with the deserved approbation of the other provinces.

Is this scheme of conduct allied to rebellion? Can any symptoms of disloyalty to his majesty, of disinclination to his illustrious family, or of disregard to his authority, be traced in it? Those, who would blend, and whose crimes have made it necessary for them to blend, the tyrannic acts of administration with the lawful measures of government, and to veil every flagitious procedure of the ministry under the venerable mantle of majesty, pretend to discover, and employ their emissaries to publish the pretended discovery of such symptoms. We are not, however, to be imposed upon by such shallow artifices. We know, that we have not violated the laws or the constitution; and that, therefore, we are safe as long as the laws retain their force and the constitution its vigor; and that,

whatever our demeanor be, we cannot be safe much longer. But another object demands our attention.

We behold, sir, with the deepest anguish we behold, that our opposition has not been as effectual as it has been constitutional. The hearts of our oppressors have not relented: our complaints have not been heard: our grievances have not been redressed: our rights are still invaded: and have we no cause to dread, that the invasions of them will be enforced, in a manner against which all reason and argument, and all opposition, of every peaceful kind, will be vain? Our opposition has hitherto increased with our oppression: shall it, in the most desperate of all contingencies, observe the same proportion?

Let us pause, sir, before we give an answer to this question. The fate of us; the fate of millions now alive; the fate of millions yet unborn, depends upon the answer. Let it be the result of calmness and of intrepidity: let it be dictated by the principles of loyalty, and the principles of liberty. Let it be such, as never, in the worst events, to give us reason to reproach ourselves, or others reason to reproach us for having done too much or too little.

Perhaps the following resolution may be found not altogether unbecoming our present situation. With the greatest deference I submit it to the mature consideration of this assembly.

“ That the act of the British parliament for altering the charter and constitution of the colony of Massachusetts Bay, and those ‘ for the impartial administration of justice’ in that colony, for shutting the port of Boston, and for quartering soldiers on the inhabitants of the colonies, are unconstitutional and void; and can confer no authority upon those who act under color of them. That the crown cannot, by its prerogative, alter the charter or constitution of that colony: that all attempts to alter the said charter or constitution, unless by the authority of the legislature of that colony, are manifest violations of the rights of that co-

lony, and illegal: that all force employed to carry such unjust and illegal attempts into execution, is force without authority: that it is the right of British subjects to resist such force: that this right is founded both upon the letter and the spirit of the British constitution."

To prove, at this time, that those acts are unconstitutional and void is, I apprehend, altogether unnecessary. The doctrine has been proved fully, on other occasions, and has received the concurring assent of British America. It rests upon plain and indubitable truths. We do not send members to the British parliament: we have parliaments, (it is immaterial what name they go by,) of our own.

That a void act can confer no authority upon those, who proceed under color of it, is a self-evident proposition.

Before I proceed to the other clauses, I think it useful to recur to some of the fundamental maxims of the British constitution; upon which, as upon a rock, our wise ancestors erected that stable fabric, against which the gates of hell have not hitherto prevailed. Those maxims I shall apply fairly, and, I flatter myself, satisfactorily to evince every particular contained in the resolution.

The government of Britain, sir, was never an arbitrary government; our ancestors were never inconsiderate enough to trust those rights, which God and nature had given them, unreservedly into the hands of their princes. However difficult it may be, in other states, to prove an original contract subsisting in any other manner, and on any other conditions, than are naturally and necessarily implied in the very idea of the first institution of a state; it is the easiest thing imaginable, since the revolution of 1688, to prove it in our constitution, and to ascertain some of the material articles, of which it consists. It has been often appealed to: it has been often broken, at least on one part: it has been often renewed: it has been often

confirmed: it still subsists in its full force: "it binds the king as much as the meanest subject." The measures of his power, and the limits, beyond which he cannot extend it, are circumscribed and regulated by the same authority, and with the same precision, as the measures of the subject's obedience; and the limits, beyond which he is under no obligation to practise it, are fixed and ascertained. Liberty is, by the constitution, of equal stability, of equal antiquity, and of equal authority with prerogative. The duties of the king and those of the subject are plainly reciprocal: they can be violated on neither side, unless they be performed on the other. The law is the common standard, by which the excesses of prerogative, as well as the excesses of liberty, are to be regulated and reformed.

Of this great compact between the king and his people, one essential article to be performed on his part is, that, in those cases where provision is expressly made and limitations set by the laws, his government shall be conducted according to those provisions, and restrained according to those limitations; that, in those cases, which are not expressly provided for by the laws, it shall be conducted by the best rules of discretion, agreeably to the general spirit of the laws, and subserviently to their ultimate end—the interest and happiness of his subjects; that, in no case, it shall be conducted contrary to the express, or to the implied principles of the constitution.

These general maxims, which we may justly consider as fundamentals of our government, will, by a plain and obvious application of them to the parts of the resolution remaining to be proved, demonstrate them to be strictly agreeable to the laws and constitution.

We can be at no loss in resolving, that the king cannot, by his prerogative, alter the charter or constitution of the colony of Massachusetts Bay. Upon what principle could such an exertion of prerogative

be justified? On the acts of parliament? They are already proved to be void. On the discretionary power which the king has of acting where the laws are silent? That power must be subservient to the interest and happiness of those, concerning whom it operates. But I go further. Instead of being supported by law, or the principles of prerogative, such an alteration is totally and absolutely repugnant to both. It is contrary to express law. The charter and constitution, we speak of, are confirmed by the only legislative power capable of confirming them; and no other power, but that which can ratify, can destroy. If it is contrary to express law, the consequence is necessary, that it is contrary to the principles of prerogative; for prerogative can operate only when the law is silent.

In no view can this alteration be justified, or so much as excused. It cannot be justified or excused by the acts of parliament; because the authority of parliament does not extend to it: it cannot be justified or excused by the operation of prerogative; because this is none of the cases, in which prerogative can operate: it cannot be justified or excused by the legislative authority of the colony; because that authority never has been, and, I presume, never will be given for any such purpose.

If I have proceeded hitherto, as I am persuaded I have, upon safe and sure ground, I can, with great confidence, advance a step further and say, that all attempts to alter the charter or constitution of that colony, unless by the authority of its own legislature, are violations of its rights, and illegal.

If those attempts are illegal, must not all force, employed to carry them into execution, be force employed against law, and without authority? The conclusion is unavoidable.

Have not British subjects, then, a right to resist such force—force acting with authority—force employed contrary to law—force employed to destroy the very existence of law and of liberty? They have, sir,

and this right is secured to them both by the letter and the spirit of the British constitution, by which the measures and the conditions of their obedience are appointed. The British liberties, sir, and the means and the right of defending them, are not the grants of princes; and of what our princes never granted they surely can never deprive us.

I beg leave, here, to mention and to obviate some plausible but ill founded objections, that have been, and will be, held forth by our adversaries, against the principles of the resolution now before us. It will be observed, that those, employed for bringing about the proposed alteration in the charter and constitution of the colony of Massachusetts Bay, act by virtue of a commission for that purpose from his majesty; that all resistance of forces, commissioned by his majesty, is resistance of his majesty's authority and government, contrary to the duty of allegiance, and treasonable. These objections will be displayed in their most specious colors; every artifice of chicanery and sophistry will be put in practice to establish them; law authorities, perhaps, will be quoted and tortured to prove them. Those principles of our constitution, which were designed to preserve and to secure the liberty of the people, and, for the sake of that, the tranquillity of government, will be perverted on this, as they have been on many other occasions, from their true intention, and will be made use of for the contrary purpose of endangering the latter, and destroying the former. The names of the most exalted virtues, on one hand, and of the most atrocious crimes, on the other, will be employed in direct contradiction to the nature of those virtues, and of those crimes; and, in this manner, those, who cannot look beyond names, will be deceived; and those, whose aim it is to deceive by names, will have an opportunity of accomplishing it. But, sir, this disguise will not impose upon us. We will look to things as well as to names; and, by doing so, we shall be fully satisfied, that all those objections rest upon mere ver-

bal sophistry, and have not even the remotest alliance with the principles of reason or of law.

In the first place, then, I say, that the persons who allege, that those, employed to alter the charter and constitution of Massachusetts Bay, act by virtue of a commission from his majesty for that purpose, speak improperly, and contrary to the truth of the case. I say, they act by virtue of no such commission; I say, it is impossible they can act by virtue of such a commission. What is called a commission either contains particular directions for the purpose mentioned; or it contains no such particular directions. In either case can those, who act for that purpose, act by virtue of a commission? In one case, what is called a commission is void; it has no legal existence; it can communicate no authority. In the other case, it extends not to the purpose mentioned. The latter point is too plain to be insisted on; I prove the former.

"*Id rex potest*," says the law, "*quod de jure potest*." The king's power is a power according to law. His commands, if the authority of lord chief justice Hale may be depended upon, are under the directive power of the law; and consequently invalid, if unlawful. "Commissions," says my lord Coke, "are legal; and are like the king's writs; and none are lawful, but such as are allowed by the common law, or warranted by some act of parliament."

Let us examine any commission expressly directing those to whom it is given, to use military force for carrying into execution the alterations, proposed to be made in the charter and constitution of Massachusetts Bay, by the foregoing maxims and authorities; and what we have said concerning it will appear obvious and conclusive. It is not warranted by any act of parliament, because, as has been mentioned on this, and has been proved on other occasions, any such act is void. It is not warranted, and I believe it will not be pretended that it is warranted, by the common law. It is not warranted by the royal prerogative, because, as

has already been fully shown, it is diametrically opposite to the principles and the ends of prerogative. Upon what foundation, then, can it lean and be supported? Upon none. Like an enchanted castle, it may terrify those, whose eyes are affected by the magic influence of the sorcerers, despotism and slavery; but so soon as the charm is dissolved, and the genuine rays of liberty and of the constitution dart in upon us, the formidable appearance vanishes, and we discover that it was the baseless fabric of a vision, that never had any real existence.

I have dwelt the longer upon this part of the objections, urged against us by our adversaries, because this part is the foundation of all the others. We have now removed it; and they must fall of course. For if the force, acting for the purposes we have mentioned, does not act, and cannot act, by virtue of any commission from his majesty, the consequence is undeniable, that it acts without his majesty's authority; that the resistance of it is no resistance of his majesty's authority, nor incompatible with the duties of allegiance.

And now, sir, let me appeal to the impartial tribunal of reason and truth; let me appeal to every unprejudiced and judicious observer of the laws of Britain, and of the constitution of the British government; let me appeal, I say, whether the principles on which I argue, or the principles on which alone my arguments can be opposed, are those which ought to be adhered to and acted upon; which of them are most consonant to our laws and liberties; which of them have the strongest, and are likely to have the most effectual tendency to establish and secure the royal power and dignity.

Are we deficient in loyalty to his majesty? Let our conduct convict, for it will fully convict, the insinuation, that we are, of falsehood. Our loyalty has always appeared in the true form of loyalty; in obeying our sovereign according to law: let those, who would

require it in any other form, know, that we call the persons who execute his commands, when contrary to law, disloyal and traitors. Are we enemies to the power of the crown? No, sir, we are its best friends: this friendship prompts us to wish, that the power of the crown may be firmly established on the most solid basis: but we know, that the constitution alone will perpetuate the former, and securely uphold the latter. Are our principles irreverent to majesty? They are quite the reverse: we ascribe to it perfection almost divine. We say, that the king can do no wrong: we say, that to do wrong is the property, not of power, but of weakness. We feel oppression, and will oppose it; but we know, for our constitution tells us, that oppression can never spring from the throne. We must, therefore, search elsewhere for its source: our infallible guide will direct us to it. Our constitution tells us, that all oppression springs from the ministers of the throne. The attributes of perfection, ascribed to the king, are, neither by the constitution, nor in fact, communicable to his ministers. They may do wrong; they have often done wrong; they have been often punished for doing wrong.

Here we may discern the true cause of all the impudent clamor and unsupported accusations of the ministers and of their minions, that have been raised and made against the conduct of the Americans. Those ministers and minions are sensible, that the opposition is directed, not against his majesty, but against them; because they have abused his majesty's confidence, brought discredit upon his government, and derogated from his justice. They see the public vengeance collected in dark clouds around them: their consciences tell them, that it should be hurled, like a thunderbolt, at their guilty heads. Appalled with guilt and fear, they skulk behind the throne. Is it disrespectful to drag them into public view, and make a distinction between them and his majesty, under

whose venerable name they daringly attempt to shelter their crimes? Nothing can more effectually contribute to establish his majesty on the throne, and to secure to him the affections of his people, than this distinction. By it we are taught to consider all the blessings of government as flowing from the throne; and to consider every instance of oppression as proceeding, which in truth, is oftenest the case, from the ministers.

If, now, it is true, that all force employed for the purposes so often mentioned, is force unwarranted by any act of parliament; unsupported by any principle of the common law; unauthorized by any commission from the crown; that, instead of being employed for the support of the constitution and his majesty's government, it must be employed for the support of oppression and ministerial tyranny; if all this is true, (and I flatter myself it appears to be true,) can any one hesitate to say, that to resist such force is lawful: and that both the letter and the spirit of the British constitution justify such resistance?

Resistance, both by the letter and the spirit of the British constitution, may be carried further, when necessity requires it, than I have carried it. Many examples in the English history might be adduced, and many authorities of the greatest weight might be brought to show, that when the king, forgetting his character and his dignity, has stepped forth, and openly avowed and taken a part in such iniquitous conduct as has been described; in such cases, indeed, the distinction abovementioned, wisely made by the constitution for the security of the crown, could not be applied; because the crown had unconstitutionally rendered the application of it impossible. What has been the consequence? The distinction between him and his minister has been lost; but they have not been raised to his situation: he has sunk to theirs.

SPEECH OF PATRICK HENRY,

DELIVERED

IN THE CONVENTION OF DELEGATES OF VIRGINIA,
MARCH 23, 1775,

On the following resolutions, introduced by himself: "*Resolved*, That a well regulated militia, composed of gentlemen and yeomen, is the natural strength and only security of a free government; that such a militia in this colony, would forever render it unnecessary for the mother country to keep among us, for the purpose of our defence, any standing army of mercenary soldiers, always subversive of the quiet, and dangerous to the liberties of the people, and would obviate the pretext of taxing us for their support.

"That the establishment of such a militia is, at this time, peculiarly necessary, by the state of our laws for the protection and defence of the country, some of which are already expired, and others will shortly be so; and that the known remissness of government in calling us together in legislative capacity, renders it too insecure, in this time of danger and distress, to rely, that opportunity will be given of renewing them, in general assembly, or making any provision to secure our inestimable rights and liberties from those further violations with which they are threatened.

"*Resolved, therefore*, That this colony be immediately put into a state of defence, and that be a committee to prepare a plan for embodying, arming and disciplining such a number of men, as may be sufficient for that purpose."

MR. PRESIDENT,

No man thinks more highly than I do of the patriotism, as well as abilities, of the very worthy gentlemen who have just addressed the House. But different men often see the same subject in different lights; and, therefore, I hope it will not be thought disrespectful to those gentlemen, if, entertaining as I do, opinions of a character very opposite to theirs, I shall speak forth my sentiments freely and without reserve. This is no time for ceremony. The question, before the House, is one of awful moment to this country. For my own part, I consider it as nothing less than a question of freedom or slavery: and in proportion to the magni-

tude of the subject ought to be the freedom of the debate. It is only in this way that we can hope to arrive at truth, and fulfil the great responsibility which we hold to God and our country. Should I keep back my opinions at such a time, through fear of giving offence, I should consider myself as guilty of treason towards my country, and of an act of disloyalty toward the majesty of heaven, which I revere above all earthly kings.

[Mr. President, it is natural to man to indulge in the illusions of hope. We are apt to shut our eyes against a painful truth, and listen to the song of that syren, till she transforms us into beasts. Is this the part of wise men, engaged in a great and arduous struggle for liberty? Are we disposed to be of the number of those, who having eyes, see not, and having ears, hear not, the things which so nearly concern their temporal salvation? For my part, whatever anguish of spirit it may cost, I am willing to know the whole truth; to know the worst, and to provide for it.

I have but one lamp by which my feet are guided; and that is the lamp of experience. I know of no way of judging of the future but by the past. And judging by the past, I wish to know what there has been in the conduct of the British ministry for the last ten years, to justify those hopes with which gentlemen have been pleased to solace themselves and the House? Is it that insidious smile with which our petition has been lately received? Trust it not, sir; it will prove a snare to your feet. Suffer not yourselves to be betrayed with a kiss. Ask yourselves how this gracious reception of our petition comports with those warlike preparations which cover our waters and darken our land. Are fleets and armies necessary to a work of love and reconciliation? Have we shown ourselves so unwilling to be reconciled, that force must be called in to win back our love? Let us not deceive ourselves, sir. These are the implements of war and subjugation; the last arguments to which kings resort. I ask gentlemen, sir, what means this martial

array, if its purpose be not to force us to submission? Can gentlemen assign any other possible motive for it? Has Great Britain any enemy, in this quarter of the world, to call for all this accumulation of navies and armies? No, sir, she has none. They are meant for us: they can be meant for no other. They are sent over to bind and rivet upon us those chains, which the British ministry have been so long forging. And what have we to oppose to them? Shall we try argument? Sir, we have been trying that for the last ten years. Have we any thing new to offer upon the subject? Nothing. We have held the subject up in every light of which it is capable; but it has been all in vain. Shall we resort to entreaty and humble supplication? What terms shall we find, which have not been already exhausted? Let us not, I beseech you, sir, deceive ourselves longer. Sir, we have done every thing that could be done, to avert the storm which is now coming on. We have petitioned; we have remonstrated; we have supplicated; we have prostrated ourselves before the throne, and have implored its interposition to arrest the tyrannical hands of the ministry and parliament. Our petitions have been slighted; our remonstrances have produced additional violence and insult; our supplications have been disregarded; and we have been spurned, with contempt, from the foot of the throne! In vain, after these things, may we indulge the fond hope of peace and reconciliation. There is no longer any room for hope. If we wish to be free—if we mean to preserve inviolate those inestimable privileges for which we have been so long contending—if we mean not basely to abandon the noble struggle in which we have been so long engaged, and which we have pledged ourselves never to abandon, until the glorious object of our contest shall be obtained—we must fight! I repeat it, sir, we must fight! An appeal to arms and to the God of Hosts is all that is left us!

They tell us, sir, that we are weak: unable to cope

with so formidable an adversary. But when shall we be stronger? Will it be the next week, or the next year? Will it be when we are totally disarmed, and when a British guard shall be stationed in every house? Shall we gather strength by irresolution and inaction? Shall we acquire the means of effectual resistance, by lying supinely on our backs, and hugging the delusive phantom of hope, until our enemies shall have bound us hand and foot? Sir, we are not weak, if we make a proper use of those means which the God of nature hath placed in our power. Three millions of people, armed in the holy cause of liberty, and in such a country as that which we possess, are invincible by any force which our enemy can send against us. Besides, sir, we shall not fight our battles alone. There is a just God who presides over the destinies of nations; and who will raise up friends to fight our battles for us. The battle, sir, is not to the strong alone; it is to the vigilant, the active, the brave. Besides, sir, we have no election. If we were base enough to desire it, it is now too late to retire from the contest. There is no retreat, but in submission and slavery! Our chains are forged! Their clanking may be heard on the plains of Boston! The war is inevitable—and let it come! I repeat it, sir, let it come!

It is in vain, sir, to extenuate the matter. Gentlemen may cry, peace, peace—but there is no peace. The war is actually begun! The next gale, that sweeps from the north, will bring to our ears the clash of resounding arms! Our brethren are already in the field! Why stand we here idle? What is it that gentlemen wish? What would they have? Is life so dear, or peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God! I know not what course others may take; but as for me, give me liberty, or give me death!

SPEECH OF WILLIAM LIVINGSTON,
GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY,
TO THE LEGISLATURE OF THAT STATE, IN THE YEAR 1777.



GENTLEMEN,

HAVING, already, laid before the assembly, by messages, the several matters that have occurred to me, as more particularly demanding their attention, during the present session, it may seem less necessary to address you in the more ceremonious form of a speech. But, conceiving it my duty to the state, to deliver my sentiments on the present situation of affairs, and the eventful contest between Great Britain and America, which could not, with any propriety, be conveyed in occasional messages, you will excuse my giving you the trouble of attending for that purpose.

After deploring with you the desolation spread through this state, by an unrelenting enemy who have, indeed, marked their progress with a devastation unknown to civilized nations, and evincive of the most implacable vengeance, I heartily congratulate you upon that subsequent series of success, where-with it hath pleased the Almighty to crown the American arms; and particularly on the important enterprise against the enemy at Trenton and the signal victory obtained over them at Princeton, by the gallant troops under the command of his excellency general Washington. Considering the contemptible figure they make at present, and the disgust they have given to many of their own confederates amongst us, by their more than Gothic ravages, (for thus doth the great Disposer of events often deduce good out of evil,) their irruption into our dominion will probably

redound to the public benefit. It has certainly enabled us the more effectually to distinguish our friends from our enemies. It has winnowed the chaff from the grain. It has discriminated the temporizing politician, who, at the first appearance of danger, was determined to secure his idol, property, at the hazard of the general weal, from the persevering patriot, who, having embarked his all in the common cause, chooses rather to risk, rather to lose that all, for the preservation of the more estimable treasure, liberty, than to possess it, (enjoy it he certainly could not,) upon the ignominious terms of tamely resigning his country and posterity to perpetual servitude. It has, in a word, opened the eyes of those who were made to believe, that their impious merit, in abetting our persecutors, would exempt them from being involved in the general calamity. But as the rapacity of the enemy was boundless, their havoc was indiscriminate, and their barbarity unparalleled. They have plundered friends and foes. Effects, capable of division, they have divided. Such as were not, they have destroyed. They have warred upon decrepit age; warred upon defenceless youth. They have committed hostilities against the professors of literature, and the ministers of religion; against public records, and private monuments, and books of improvement, and papers of curiosity, and against the arts and sciences. They have butchered the wounded, asking for quarter; mangled the dying, weltering in their blood; refused to the dead the rites of sepulture; suffered prisoners to perish for want of sustenance; violated the chastity of women; disfigured private dwellings of taste and elegance; and, in the rage of impiety and barbarism, profaned and prostrated edifices dedicated to Almighty God.

And yet there are amongst us, who, either from ambitious or lucrative motives, or intimidated by the terror of their arms, or from a partial fondness for the British constitution, or deluded by insidious

propositions, are secretly abetting, or openly aiding their machinations to deprive us of that liberty, without which man is a beast, and government a curse.

Besides the inexpressible baseness of wishing to rise on the ruins of our country, or to acquire riches at the expense of the liberties and fortunes of millions of our fellow-citizens, how soon would these delusive dreams, upon the conquest of America, end in disappointment? For where is the fund to recompense those retainers to the British army? Was every estate in America to be confiscated, and converted into cash, the product would not satiate the avidity of their national dependants, nor furnish an adequate repast for the keen appetites of their own ministerial beneficiaries. Instead of gratuities and promotion, these unhappy accomplices in their tyranny, would meet with supercilious looks and cold disdain; and, after tedious attendance, be finally told by their haughty masters, that they, indeed, approved the treason, but despised the traitor. Insulted, in fine, by their pretended protectors, but real betrayers, and goaded with the stings of their own consciences, they would remain the frightful monuments of contempt and divine indignation, and linger out the rest of their days in self-condemnation and remorse; and, in weeping over the ruins of their country, which themselves had been instrumental in reducing to desolation and bondage.

Others there are, who, terrified by the power of Britain, have persuaded themselves, that she is not only formidable, but irresistible. That her power is great, is beyond question; that it is not to be despised, is the dictate of common prudence. But, then, we ought also to consider her, as weak in council, and ingulfed in debt; reduced in her trade; reduced in her revenue; immersed in pleasure; enervated with luxury; and, in dissipation and venality, surpassing all Europe. We ought to consider her as hated by a potent rival, her natural enemy, and particularly exasperated by her imperious conduct in the last war, as well

as her insolent manner of commencing it; and thence inflamed with resentment, and only watching a favorable juncture for open hostilities. We ought to consider the amazing expense and difficulty of transporting troops and provisions above three thousand miles, with the impossibility of recruiting their army at a less distance; save only with such recreants, whose conscious guilt must, at the first approach of danger, appal the stoutest heart. Those insuperable obstacles are known and acknowledged by every virtuous and impartial man in the nation. Even the author of this horrid war, is incapable of concealing his own confusion and distress. Too great to be wholly suppressed, it frequently discovers itself in the course of his speech—a speech terrible in word, and fraught with contradiction; breathing threatenings and betraying terror; a motley mixture of magnanimity and consternation, of grandeur and abasement. With troops invincible, he dreads a defeat, and wants reinforcements. Victorious in America, and triumphant on the ocean, he is a humble dependant on a petty prince; and apprehends an attack upon his own metropolis; and, with full confidence in the friendship and alliance of France, he trembles upon his throne at her secret designs and open preparations.

With all this, we ought to contrast the numerous and hardy sons of America, inured to toil, seasoned alike to heat and cold, hale, robust, patient of fatigue, and, from their ardent love of liberty, ready to face danger and death; the immense extent of continent, which our infatuated enemies have undertaken to subjugate; the remarkable unanimity of its inhabitants, notwithstanding the exception of a few apostates and deserters; their unshaken resolution to maintain their freedom or perish in the attempt; the fertility of our soil in all kinds of provisions necessary for the support of war; our inexhaustible internal resources for military stores and naval armaments; our comparative economy in public expenses; and the

millions, we save by having reprobated the further exchange of our valuable staples for the worthless baubles and finery of English manufacture. Add to this, that in a cause so just and righteous on our part, we have the highest reason to expect the blessing of heaven upon our glorious conflict. For, who can doubt the interposition of the Supremely Just, in favor of a people, forced to recur to arms in defence of every thing dear and precious, against a nation deaf to our complaints, rejoicing in our misery, wantonly aggravating our oppressions, determined to divide our substance, and, by fire and sword, to compel us into submission?

Respecting the constitution of Great Britain, bating certain royal prerogatives of dangerous tendency, it has been applauded by the best judges; and displays, in its original structure, illustrious proofs of wisdom and the knowledge of human nature. But what avails the best constitution with the worst administration? For, what is their present government, and what has it been for years past, but a pensioned confederacy against reason, and virtue, and honor, and patriotism, and the rights of man? What were their leaders, but a set of political craftsmen, flagitiously conspiring to erect the babel, despotism, upon the ruins of the ancient and beautiful fabric of law; a shameless cabal, notoriously employed in deceiving the prince, corrupting the parliament, debasing the people, depressing the most virtuous, and exalting the most profligate; in short, an insatiable junto of public spoilers, lavishing the national wealth, and, by peculation and plunder, accumulating a debt already enormous? And what was the majority of their parliament, formerly the most august assembly in the world, but venal pensioners to the crown; a perfect mockery of all popular representation; and, at the absolute devotion of every minister? What were the characteristics of their administration of the provinces? The substitution of regal instructions in the room of law; the maul-

tiplication of officers to strengthen the court interest; perpetually extending the prerogatives of the king, and retrenching the rights of the subject; advancing to the most eminent stations men, without education; and of the most dissolute manners; employing, with the people's money, a band of emissaries to misrepresent and traduce the people; and, to crown the system of misrule, sporting our persons and estates, by filling the highest seats of justice with bankrupts, bullies and blockheads.

From such a nation, (though all this we bore, and should perhaps have borne for another century, had they not avowedly claimed the unconditional disposal of life and property,) it is evidently our duty to be detached. To remain happy or safe, in our connexion with her, became thenceforth utterly impossible. She is moreover precipitating her own fall, or the age of miracles is returned, and Britain a phenomenon in the political world, without a parallel. The proclamations to ensnare the timid and credulous, are beyond expression disingenuous and tantalizing. In a gilded pill they conceal real poison: they add insult to injury. After repeated intimations of commissioners to treat with America, we are presented, instead of the peaceful olive-branch, with the devouring sword: instead of being visited by plenipotentiaries to bring matters to an accommodation, we are invaded by an army, in their opinion, able to subdue us. And upon discovering their error, the terms propounded amount to this: "If you will submit without resistance, we are content to take your property, and spare your lives; and then (the consummation of arrogance!) we will graciously pardon you, for having hitherto defended both."

Considering, then, their bewildered councils, their blundering ministry, their want of men and money, their impaired credit and declining commerce, their lost revenues and starving islands, the corruption of their parliament, with the effeminacy of their nation.

and the success of their enterprize is against all probability. Considering further, the horrid enormity of their waging war against their own brethren, expostulating for an audience, complaining of injuries, and supplicating for redress, and waging it with a ferocity and vengeance unknown to modern ages, and contrary to all laws, human and divine; and we can neither question the justice of our opposition, nor the assistance of heaven to crown it with victory.

Let us not, however, presumptuously rely on the interposition of providence, without exerting those efforts which it is our duty to exert, and which our bountiful Creator has enabled us to exert. Let us do our part to open the next campaign with redoubled vigor; and until the United States have humbled the pride of Britain, and obtained an honorable peace, cheerfully furnish our proportion for continuing the war—a war, founded, on our side, in the immutable obligation of self-defence, and in support of freedom, of virtue, and every thing tending to ennoble our nature, and render a people happy; on their part, prompted by boundless avarice, and a thirst for absolute sway, and built on a claim repugnant to every principle of reason and equity—a claim subversive to all liberty, natural, civil, moral and religious; incompatible with human happiness, and usurping the attributes of Deity, degrading man and blaspheming God.

Let us all, therefore, of every rank and degree, remember our plighted faith and honor, to maintain the cause with our lives and fortunes. Let us inflexibly persevere in prosecuting, to a happy period, what has been so gloriously begun, and hitherto so prosperously conducted. And let those, in more distinguished stations, use all their influence and authority, to rouse the supine, to animate the irresolute, to confirm the wavering, and to draw from his lurking hole the skulking neutral, who, leaving to others the heat and burden of the day, means in the final result to reap the fruits of that victory, for which he will not contend.

Let us be peculiarly assiduous in bringing to condign punishment those detestable parricides, who have been openly active against their country. And may we, in all our deliberations and proceedings, be influenced and directed by the great Arbiter of the fate of nations, by whom empires rise and fall, and who will not always suffer the sceptre of the wicked to rest on the lot of the righteous, but in due time avenge an injured people on their unfeeling oppressor, and his bloody instruments.

AN ORATION

DELIVERED JULY 4, 1787,

BEFORE THE SOCIETY OF THE CINCINNATI OF THE STATE
OF NEW-YORK; IN COMMEMORATION OF THE INDE-
PENDENCE OF AMERICA,

BY ROBERT LIVINGSTON.

I COULD have wished, gentlemen, that the task I am now about to perform, had been assigned to some abler speaker; and in that view, I, long since, tendered my apology for declining it, and hoped, till lately, that it had been accepted. Disappointed in this hope, and unwilling to treat any mark of your favor with neglect, I determined to obey your commands, although I was satisfied, that, in the execution of them, I should not answer your expectations. There is a style of eloquence adapted to occasions of this kind, to which I feel myself unequal; a style which requires the glowing imagination of younger speakers, who, coming recently from the schools of rhetoric, know how to dress their sentiments in all its flowery ornaments. The turbulence of the times, since I first entered upon public life, and the necessity, they imposed upon those who engaged in them, of attending rather to things than words, will, I fear, render me, if not a useless, at least an unpolished speaker.

If the mind dwells with pleasure on interesting events; if the soul pants to emulate the noble deeds it contemplates; if virtue derives new force from the successful struggles of the virtuous, it is wise to set apart certain seasons, when, freed from meaner cares, we commemorate events, which have contributed to the happiness of mankind, or afford examples worthy their

imitation: What are we this day called upon to commemorate? Some signal victory, in which the victor weeps the loss of friends, and humanity mourns over the graves of the vanquished? The birth of some prince, whom force, fraud, or accident, has entitled to a throne? Or even that of some patriot, who has raised the reputation, and defended the rights of his country? No, gentlemen, a nobler subject than the splendor of victories, or the birth of princes, demand our attention. We are called upon to commemorate the successful battles of freedom, and the birth of nations.

It may be expected, and indeed I believe it is usual on such occasions, that I should tread the steps we have taken from the dawn of oppression to the bright sunshine of independence; that I should celebrate the praise of patriots who have been actors in the glorious scene; and more particularly that I should lead you to the shrines of those that have offered up their lives in support of their principles, and sealed with their blood your charters of freedom. Had I no other object in view than to amuse you and indulge my own feelings, I should take this path. For what task more delightful, than to contemplate the successful struggles of virtue; to see it, at one moment, panting under the grasp of oppression, and rising in the next with renewed strength; as if, like the giant son of earth, she had acquired vigor from the fall; to see hope and disappointment, plenty and want, defeats and victories, following each other in rapid succession, and contributing, like light and shade to the embellishment of the piece! What more soothing to the soft and delicate emotions of humanity, than to wander, with folded arms and slow and pensive step, amidst the graves of departed heroes, to indulge the mingled emotions of grief and admiration; at one moment, giving way to private sorrow, and lamenting the loss of a friend, a relation, a brother; in the next, glowing with patriot warmth, gazing with ardor on their wounds, and invoking their spirits, while we ask of heaven to inspire us with equal fortitude! But, however pleasing this task, the desire of

being useful impels me, at this interesting moment, to forego this pleasure; to call you from this tender scene; to remind you that you are the citizens of a free state; to bid you rejoice with Roman pride, that those you love have done their duty; to exhort you to crown the glorious work they have begun; for, alas! my friends, though they have nobly performed the part assigned them, the work is still unfinished, and much remains for us to do. It may not, therefore, be improper, amidst the congratulations I make you on this day—this day, distinguished, in the annals of fame, for the triumph of freedom and the birth of nations, to inquire how far it has been productive of the advantages we might reasonably have expected, and where they have fallen short of our expectations.

To investigate the causes that have conduced to our disappointment, two objects demand our attention; our internal and federal governments: either, to those who are disposed to view only the gloomy side of the picture, will afford sufficient matter for censure, and too much cause of uneasiness. Many desponding spirits, misled by their reflections, have ceased to rejoice in independence, and to doubt whether it is to be considered as a blessing. God forbid that there should be any such among us. For, whatever may be the pressure of our present evils, they will cease to operate, when we resolve to remove them; the remedy is within our reach, and I have sufficient confidence in our fortitude to hope that it will be applied.

Let those, however, who know not the value of our present situation, contrast it with the state of servitude, to which we should have been reduced, had we patiently submitted to the yoke of Britain. She had long since seen our ease with envy, and our strength with jealousy. Loaded with debt, she wished to share that affluence, which she attributed to her protection, rather than to our industry. Tenacious of her supposed supremacy, she could not be indifferent to those increasing numbers which threatened its subversion. Avarice and timidity concurred in framing

a system of despotism, which, but for our resistance, would have reduced us to the vilest subjection. Having resisted, accommodation was vain; pretences would not have been wanting to ruin those that had been active in opposition. Disputes among ourselves would have been encouraged; and advantages derived from our disunion, would have enabled her ultimately to attain her object. No alternative was left, but independence, or abject submission. We have chosen as became a wise and generous people. Let slaves or cowards disapprove the choice.

Our constitutions are formed to insure the happiness of a virtuous nation. They guard against the tumult and confusion of unwieldy popular assemblies, while they yield to every citizen his due share of power. They preserve the administration of justice pure and unbiassed, by the independence of the judges. They prevent abuses in the execution of the laws, by committing the care of enforcing them to magistrates, who have no share in making, nor voice in expounding them. In these circumstances, they excel the boasted models of Greece, or Rome, and those of all other nations, in having precisely marked out the power of the government, and the rights of the people. With us the law is written: no party can justify their errors under former abuses or doubtful precedents. With these constitutions, I shall be asked, how it has happened, that the evils, hinted at, continue to exist? I shall endeavor to answer this inquiry, since my object in treating of this subject is to impress upon you the obligations we are under as citizens, as men whose past services entitle us to some weight in the community, zealously to unite in promoting a constitutional reform of every abuse, that affects the government.

Our constitutions being purely democratic, the people are sovereign and absolute. The faults of absolute governments are to be charged to the sovereign: in ours, they must be traced back to the people.

If our executive has sufficient energy, if the judicial is competent to the administration of justice, if our legislative is so formed as that no law can pass without due deliberation, all the ends of government are answered, so far as they depend upon the constitution. If still it falls short of expectation, the evils must be sought in the administration: and since every person, concerned in that, is either mediately or immediately chosen by the people, they may change it at pleasure. What can be devised more perfect than that constitution, which puts in the power of those, who experience the effects of a maladministration, to prevent their continuance; not by mad, tumultuous and irregular acts, as in the ancient republics. but by such as are cool, deliberate and constitutional? If they still exist, they must be charged to the negligence of the people, who, after violent agitation, have sunk into such a state of torpor and indifference with respect to government, as to be careless into what hands they trust their dearest rights. When we choose an agent to manage our private affairs, an executor to distribute our estate, we are solicitous about the integrity and abilities of those we entrust: we consult our friends: we make the choice after due deliberation. Is it not astonishing, that, when we are to elect men, whose power extends to our liberty, our property and our lives, we should be so totally indifferent, that not one in ten of us tenders his vote? Can it be thought, that an enlightened people believe the science of government level to the meanest capacity—that experience, application and education are unnecessary to those who are to frame laws for the government of the state? And yet, are instances wanting in which these have been proscribed and their place supplied by those insidious arts, which have rendered them suspected? Are past services the passport to future honors? Or, have you yourselves, gentlemen, escaped the general obloquy? Are you not calumniated by those you deem unworthy of your society? Are you

not even shunned by some who should wear with pride and pleasure this badge of former services?

You have learned in the school of adversity to appreciate characters. You are not formed, whoever may direct, to promote measures you disapprove. Men, used to command and to obey, are sensible of the value of government, and will not consent to its debasement. Your services entitle you to the respect and favor of a grateful people. Envy and the ambition of the unworthy, concur to rob you of the rank you merit.

To these causes, we owe the cloud that obscures our internal governments. But let us not despair: the sun of science is beginning to rise; and, as new light breaks in upon the minds of our fellow-citizens, that cloud will be dispelled.

Having observed, that our internal constitutions are adequate to the purposes for which they were formed, and that the inconveniences, we have some time felt under them, were imputable to causes which it was in our power to remove, I might perhaps add, that the continuance of those evils, is a proof of the happiness these governments impart; since, had they not been more than balanced by advantages, they would have pressed with such weight, as to have compelled the people to apply the remedy, the constitution affords. But, when I turn my eyes to the other great object of a patriot's attention, our federal government, I confess to you, my friends, I sicken at the sight. Nothing presents itself to my view, but a nerveless council, united by imaginary ties, brooding over ideal decrees, which caprice, or fancy, is, at pleasure, to annul, or execute! I see trade languish; public credit expire; and that glory, which is not less necessary to the prosperity of a nation, than reputation to individuals, a victim to opprobrium and disgrace. Here, my friends, you are particularly interested; for, I believe, I should do little justice to the motives that induced you to brave the dangers and hardships of a ten years' war,

if I supposed you had nothing more in view, than humble peace and ignominious obscurity. Brave souls are influenced by nobler motives; and, I persuade myself, that the rank and glory of the nation, you have established, were among the strongest that nerved your arms, and invigorated your hearts. Let us not, then, my friends, loose sight of this splendid object; having pursued it through fields of blood, let us not relinquish the chase, when nothing is necessary to its attainment, but union; firmness and temperate deliberation.

In times of extreme danger; whoever has the courage to seize the helm, may command the ship: each mariner, distrusting his own skill, is ready to repose upon that of others. Congress, not attending to this reflection, were misled by the implicit respect, that, during the war, was paid to their recommendations; and without looking forward to times, when the circumstances, which made the basis of their authority, should no longer exist, they formed a constitution only adapted to such circumstances. Weak in itself, a variety of causes have conspired to render it weaker. Some states have totally neglected their representation in Congress; while some others have been inattentive, in their choice of delegates, to those qualities, which are essential to the support of its reputation: objects of some moment, where authority is founded on opinion only. To these, I am sorry, gentlemen, to add a third, which operates with peculiar force in some states: the love of power, of which the least worthy are always the most tenacious. To deal out a portion of it to Congress, would be to share that which some, among those who are elected by popular favor, already find too little for their own ambition. To preserve it, rulers of free states practise a lesson they have received from eastern tyrants; and, as these, to preserve the succession, put out the eyes of all, that may approach the seat of power, so those strive to blind the people, whose discernment, they fear, may expel them from it.

I will not wear your patience and my own, by contending with those chimeras they have raised, to fright the people from remedying the only real defect of this government. Nor will I dwell upon that wretched system of policy, which has sunk the interest and reputation of such states in the great council of America, and drawn upon them the hatred and contempt of their neighbors. Who will deny, that the most serious evils daily flow from the debility of our federal constitution? Who but owns, that we are, at this moment, colonies, for every purpose but that of internal taxation, to the nation from which we vainly hoped our sword had freed us? Who but sees, with indignation, British ministers daily dictating laws for the destruction of our commerce? Who but laments the ruin of that brave, hardy and generous race of men, who are necessary for its support? Who but feels, that we are degraded from the rank we ought to hold among the nations of the earth? Despised by some, maltreated by others, and unable to defend ourselves against the cruel depredations of the most contemptible pirates. At this moment, yes, great God! at this moment, some among those, perhaps, who have labored for the establishment of our freedom, are groaning in barbarian bondage. Hands, that may have wielded the sword in our defence, are loaded with chains. Toilsome tasks, gloomy prisons, whips and tortures, are the portion of men, who have triumphed with us, and exulted in the idea of giving being to nations, and freedom to unnumbered generations!

These, sirs, these are a few of the many evils that result from the want of a federal government. Our internal constitutions may make us happy at home, but nothing short of a federal one can render us safe or respectable abroad. Let us not, however, in our eagerness to attain one, forget to preserve the other inviolate; for better is distress abroad, than tyranny and anarchy at home. A precious deposit is given into our keeping: we hold in our hands the fate of future

generations. While we acknowledge, that no government can exist, without confidence in the governing power, let us also remember, that none can remain free, where that confidence is incautiously bestowed,

How, gentlemen, shall I apologize for having obtruded this serious address upon the gayeties of this happy day? I told you, and told you truly, that I was ill qualified to play the holiday orator; and I might have added, that the joy of this day is ever attended, in my mind, with a thousand mingled emotions. Reflection on the past brings to memory a variety of tender and interesting events; while hope and fear, anxiety and pleasure, alternately possess me, when I endeavor to pierce the veil of futurity. But never, never before, have they pressed upon me with the weight they do at present. I feel that some change is necessary; and yet I dread, lest the demon of jealousy should prevent such change; or the restless spirit of innovation, should carry us beyond what is necessary. I look round for aid; I see in you a band of patriots—the supporters of your country's rights: I feel myself indebted to you for the freedom we enjoy: I know, that your emotions cannot be different from my own; and I strive, by giving you the same views on these important subjects, to unite your efforts in the common cause. Let us, then, preserve pure and perfect, those principles of friendship for each other, of love for our country, of respect for the union, which supported us in our past difficulties. Let us reject the trammels of party; and, as far as our efforts will go, call every man to the post, his virtues and abilities entitle him to occupy. Let us watch, with vigilant attention, over the conduct of those in power; but let us not, with coward caution, restrain their efforts to be useful; and let us implore that omnipotent Being, who gave us strength and wisdom in the hour of danger, to direct our great council to that happy mean, which may afford us respect and security abroad, and peace, liberty and prosperity at home.

THE ADDRESS

OF THE

TWELVE UNITED COLONIES, BY THEIR DELEGATES IN CONGRESS, TO THE INHABITANTS OF GREAT BRITAIN :

BY RICHARD HENRY LEE,* 1775.



FRIENDS, COUNTRYMEN AND BRETHREN!

By these, and by every other appellation that may designate the ties which bind us to each other, we entreat your serious attention to this our second attempt to prevent their dissolution. Remembrance of former friendships, pride in the glorious achievements of our common ancestors, and affection for the heirs of their virtues, have hitherto preserved our mutual connexion; but when that friendship is violated by the grossest injuries; when the pride of ancestry becomes our reproach, and we are no otherwise allied than as tyrants and slaves; when reduced to the melancholy alternative of renouncing your favor or our freedom; can we hesitate about the choice? Let the spirit of Britons determine.

In a former address, we asserted our rights, and stated the injuries we had then received. We hoped, that the mention of our wrongs would have roused that honest indignation which has slept too long for your honor or the welfare of the empire. But we have not been permitted to entertain this pleasing expecta-

* Of the numerous speeches in Congress, and popular addresses, of "the American Cicero," none are extant which justify his high reputation as an orator. This address to the inhabitants of Great Britain, is undoubtedly the production of his pen, and to use the words of his biographer, "is an imperishable monument to his genius and eloquence."—COMPILER.

tion. Every day brought an accumulation of injuries, and the invention of the ministry has been constantly exercised in adding to the calamities of your American brethren.

After the most valuable right of legislation was infringed; when the powers, assumed by your parliament, in which we are not represented, and from our local and other circumstances, cannot properly be represented, rendered our property precarious; after being denied that mode of trial, to which we have long been indebted for the safety of our persons, and the preservation of our liberties; after being, in many instances, divested of those laws which were transmitted to us by our common ancestors, and subjected to an arbitrary code, compiled under the auspices of Roman tyrants; after those charters, which encouraged our predecessors to brave death and danger in every shape, on unknown seas, in deserts unexplored, amidst barbarous and inhospitable nations, were annulled; when, without the form of trial, without a public accusation, whole colonies were condemned, their trade destroyed, their inhabitants impoverished; when soldiers were encouraged to imbrue their hands in the blood of Americans, by offers of impunity; when new modes of trial were instituted for the ruin of the accused, where the charge carried with it the horrors of conviction; when a despotic government was established in a neighboring province, and its limits extended to every of our frontiers; we little imagined that anything could be added to this black catalogue of unprovoked injuries: but we have unhappily been deceived, and the late measures of the British ministry fully convince us, that their object is the reduction of these colonies to slavery and ruin.

To confirm this assertion, let us recall your attention to the affairs of America, since our last address. Let us combat the calumnies of our enemies; and let us warn you of the dangers that threaten you in our destruction. Many of your fellow subjects, whose situa-

tion deprived them of other support, drew their maintenance from the sea ; but the deprivation of our liberty being insufficient to satisfy the resentment of our enemies, the horrors of famine were superadded : and a British parliament, who, in better times, were the protectors of innocence, and the patrons of humanity, have, without distinction of age or sex, robbed thousands of the food which they were accustomed to draw from that inexhaustible source, placed in their neighborhood by the benevolent Creator.

Another act of your legislature shuts our ports, and prohibits our trade with any but those states, from whom the great law of self-preservation renders it absolutely necessary we should at present withhold our commerce. But this act, (whatever may have been its design,) we consider rather as injurious to your opulence than our interest. All our commerce terminates with you ; and the wealth, we procure from other nations, is soon exchanged for your superfluities. Our remittances must then cease with our trade ; and our refinements with our affluence. We trust, however, that laws, which deprive us of every blessing but a soil that teems with the necessaries of life, and that liberty, which renders the enjoyment of them secure, will not relax our vigor in their defence.

We might here observe on the cruelty and inconsistency of those, who, while they publicly brand us with reproachful and unworthy epithets, endeavor to deprive us of the means of defence, by their interposition with foreign powers, and to deliver us to the lawless ravages of a merciless soldiery. But happily we are not without resources ; and though the timid and humiliating applications of a British ministry should prevail with foreign nations, yet industry, prompted by necessity, will not leave us without the necessary supplies.

We could wish to go no further, and, not to wound the ear of humanity, leave untold those rigorous acts of oppression, which are daily exercised in the town of

Boston, did we not hope, that by disclaiming their deeds, and punishing the perpetrators, you would shortly vindicate the honor of the British name, and re-establish the violated laws of justice.

That once populous, flourishing and commercial town, is now garrisoned by an army, sent not to protect, but to enslave its inhabitants. The civil government is overturned, and a military despotism erected upon its ruins. Without law, without right, powers are assumed unknown to the constitution. Private property, is unjustly invaded. The inhabitants, daily subjected to the licentiousness of the soldiery, are forbid to remove, in defiance of their natural rights, in violation of the most solemn compacts. Or, if after long and wearisome solicitation, a pass is procured, their effects are detained, and even those who are most favored, have no alternative but poverty or slavery. The distress of many thousand people, wantonly deprived of the necessities of life, is a subject, on which we would not wish to enlarge.

Yet we cannot but observe, that a British fleet, (unjustified even by acts of your legislature,) are daily employed in ruining our commerce, seizing our ships, and depriving whole communities of their daily bread. Nor will a regard for your honor permit us to be silent, while British troops sully your glory, by actions, which the most inveterate enmity will not palliate among civilized nations—the wanton and unnecessary destruction of Charlestown, a large, ancient and once populous town, just before deserted by its inhabitants, who had fled to avoid the fury of your soldiery.

If still you retain those sentiments of compassion, by which Britons have ever been distinguished; if the humanity, which tempered the valor of our common ancestors, has not degenerated into cruelty, you will lament the miseries of their descendants.

To what are we to attribute this treatment? If to any secret principle of the constitution, let it be mentioned; let us learn, that the government we have long

revered, is not without its defects; and, that while it gives freedom to a part, it necessarily enslaves the remainder of the empire. If such a principle exists, why for ages has it ceased to operate? Why at this time is it called into action? Can no reason be assigned for this conduct? Or must it be resolved into the wanton exercise of arbitrary power? And shall the descendants of Britons tamely submit to this? No, sirs, we never will, while we revere the memory of our gallant and virtuous ancestors, we never can surrender those glorious privileges, for which they fought, bled and conquered. Admit that your fleets could destroy our towns, and ravage our sea-coasts; these are inconsiderable objects, things of no moment to men whose bosoms glow with the ardor of liberty. We can retire beyond the reach of your navy, and, without any sensible diminution of the necessities of life, enjoy a luxury, which from that period you will want—the luxury of being free.

We know the force of your arms, and was it called forth in the cause of justice and your country, we might dread the exertion; but will Britons fight under the banners of tyranny? Will they counteract the labors, and disgrace the victories of their ancestors? Will they forge chains for their posterity? If they descend to this unworthy task, will their swords retain their edge, their arms their accustomed vigor? Britons can never become the instruments of oppression, till they lose the spirit of freedom, by which alone they are invincible.

Our enemies charge us with sedition. In what does it consist? In our refusal to submit to unwarrantable acts of injustice and cruelty? If so, show us a period in your history, in which you have not been equally seditious.

We are accused of aiming at independence; but how is this accusation supported? By the allegations of your ministers, not by our actions. Abused, insulted and condemned, what steps have we pursued to ob-

tain redress? We have carried our dutiful petitions to the throne. We have applied to your justice for relief. We have retrenched our luxury, and withheld our trade.

The advantages of our commerce were designed as a compensation for your protection. When you ceased to protect, for what were we to compensate?

What has been the success of our endeavors? The clemency of our sovereign is unhappily diverted; our petitions are treated with indignity; our prayers answered by insults. Our application to you remains unnoticed, and leaves us the melancholy apprehension of your wanting either the will, or the power, to assist us.

Even under these circumstances, what measures have we taken that betray a desire of independence? Have we called in the aid of those foreign powers, who are the rivals of your grandeur? When your troops were few and defenceless, did we take advantage of their distress and expel them our towns? Or have we permitted them to fortify, to receive new aid, and to acquire additional strength?

Let not your enemies and ours persuade you, that in this we were influenced by fear, or any other unworthy motive. The lives of Britons are still dear to us. They are the children of our parents, and an uninterrupted intercourse of mutual benefits had knit the bonds of friendship. When hostilities were commenced, when, on a late occasion, we were wantonly attacked by your troops, though we repelled their assaults and returned their blows, yet we lamented the wounds they obliged us to give; nor have we yet learned to rejoice at a victory over Englishmen.

As we wish not to color our actions, or disguise our thoughts, we shall, in the simple language of truth avow the measures we have pursued, the motives upon which we have acted, and our future designs.

When our late petition to the throne produced no other effect than fresh injuries, and votes of your legis-

lature, calculated to justify every severity; when your fleets and your armies were prepared to wrest from us our property, to rob us of our liberties or our lives; when the hostile attempts of General Gage evinced his designs, we levied armies for our security and defence. When the powers vested in the governor of Canada gave us reason to apprehend danger from that quarter; and we had frequent intimations, that a cruel and savage enemy was to be let loose upon the defenceless inhabitants of our frontiers; we took such measures as prudence dictated, as necessity will justify. We possessed ourselves of Crown Point and Ticonderoga. Yet give us leave most solemnly to assure you, that we have not yet lost sight of the object, we have ever had in view—a reconciliation with you on constitutional principles, and a restoration of that friendly intercourse, which, to the advantage of both, we till lately maintained.

The inhabitants of this country apply themselves chiefly to agriculture and commerce. As their fashions and manners are similar to yours, your markets must afford them the conveniences and luxuries, for which they exchange the produce of their labors. The wealth of this extended continent centres with you; and our trade is so regulated as to be subservient only to your interest. You are too reasonable to expect, that by taxes, (in addition to this,) we should contribute to your expense; to believe after diverting the fountain, that the streams can flow with unabated force.

It has been said, that we refuse to submit to the restrictions on our commerce. From whence is this inference drawn? Not from our words, we having repeatedly declared the contrary; and we again profess our submission to the several acts of trade and navigation, passed before the year 1763, trusting, nevertheless, in the equity and justice of parliament, that such of them as, upon cool and impartial consideration, shall appear to have imposed unnecessary or grievous re-

strictions, will, at some happier period, be repealed or altered. And we cheerfully consent to the operation of such acts of the British parliament, as shall be restrained to the regulation of our external commerce, for the purpose of securing the commercial advantages of the whole empire to the mother country, and the commercial benefits of its respective members; excluding every idea of taxation, internal or external, for raising a revenue on the subjects in America without their consent.

It is alleged that we contribute nothing to the common defence. To this we answer, that the advantages, which Great Britain receives from the monopoly of our trade, far exceed our proportion of the expense necessary for that purpose. But should these advantages be inadequate thereto, let the restrictions on our trade be removed, and we will cheerfully contribute such proportion when constitutionally required.

It is a fundamental principle of the British constitution, that every man should have at least a representative share in the formation of those laws, by which he is bound. Were it otherwise, the regulation of our internal police by a British parliament, who are, and ever will be, unacquainted with our local circumstances, must be always inconvenient, and frequently oppressive, working our wrong, without yielding any possible advantage to you.

A plan of accommodation, (as it has been absurdly called,) has been proposed by your ministers to our respective assemblies. Were this proposal free from every other objection, but that which arises from the time of the offer, it would not be unexceptionable. Can men deliberate with the bayonet at their breast? Can they treat with freedom, while their towns are sacked; when daily instances of injustice and oppression, disturb the slower operations of reason?

If this proposal is really such as you would offer, and we accept, why was it delayed till the nation was put to useless expense, and we were reduced to our present

melancholy situation? If it holds forth nothing, why was it proposed? Unless, indeed, to deceive you into a belief, that we were unwilling to listen to any terms of accommodation! But what is submitted to our consideration? We contend for the disposal of our property. We are told that our demand is unreasonable, that our assemblies may indeed collect our money, but that they must at the same time offer, not what your exigencies or ours may require, but so much as shall be deemed sufficient to satisfy the desires of a minister, and enable him to provide for favorites and dependants. A recurrence to your own treasury will convince you how little of the money, already extorted from us, has been applied to the relief of your burdens. To suppose that we would thus grasp the shadow, and give up the substance, is adding insult to injuries.

We have, nevertheless, again presented an humble and dutiful petition to our sovereign; and to remove every imputation of obstinacy, have requested his majesty to direct some mode, by which the united applications of his faithful colonists may be improved into a happy and permanent reconciliation. We are willing to treat on such terms as can alone render an accommodation lasting, and we flatter ourselves that our pacific endeavors will be attended with a removal of ministerial troops, and a repeal of those laws, of the operation of which we complain, on the one part, and a disbanding of our army, and a dissolution of our commercial associations, on the other.

Yet conclude not from this that we propose to surrender our property into the hands of your ministry, or vest your parliament with a power which may terminate in our destruction. The great bulwarks of our constitution we have desired to maintain by every temperate, by every peaceable means; but your ministers, (equal foes to British and American freedom,) have added to their former oppressions an attempt to reduce us, by the sword, to a base and abject submission. On the sword, therefore, we are compelled to

rely for protection. Should victory declare in your favor, yet men, trained to arms from their infancy, and animated by the love of liberty, will afford neither a cheap nor easy conquest. Of this, at least, we are assured, that our struggle will be glorious, our success certain; since even in death we shall find that freedom which in life you forbid us to enjoy.

Let us now ask what advantages are to attend our reduction? The trade of a ruined and desolate country is always inconsiderable, its revenue trifling; the expense of subjecting and retaining it in subjection certain and inevitable. What then remains but the gratification of an ill-judged pride, or the hope of rendering us subservient to designs on your liberty?

Soldiers, who have sheathed their swords in the bowels of their American brethren, will not draw them with more reluctance against you. When too late you may lament the loss of that freedom, which we exhort you, while still in your power, to preserve.

On the other hand, should you prove unsuccessful; should that connexion, which we most ardently wish to maintain, be dissolved; should your ministers exhaust your treasures, and waste the blood of your countrymen, in vain attempts on our liberty; do they not deliver you, weak and defenceless, to your natural enemies?

Since, then, your liberty must be the price of your victories; your ruin, of your defeat; what blind fatality can urge you to a pursuit destructive of all that Britons hold dear?

If you have no regard to the connexion that has for ages subsisted between us; if you have forgot the wounds we have received fighting by your side for the extension of the empire; if our commerce is not an object below your consideration; if justice and humanity have lost their influence on your hearts; still motives are not wanting to excite your indignation at the measures now pursued: your wealth, your honor, your liberty are at stake.

Notwithstanding the distress to which we are reduced, we sometimes forget our own afflictions, to anticipate and sympathize in yours. We grieve that rash and inconsiderate councils should precipitate the destruction of an empire, which has been the envy and admiration of ages; and call God to witness! that we would part with our property, endanger our lives and sacrifice every thing but liberty, to redeem you from ruin.

A cloud hangs over your heads and ours; ere this reaches you, it may probably burst upon us; let us then, (before the remembrance of former kindness is obliterated,) once more repeat those appellations which are ever grateful in our ears; let us entreat heaven to avert our ruin, and the destruction that threatens our friends, brethren and countrymen, on the other side of the Atlantic.

SPEECH OF WILLIAM PINKNEY,

DELIVERED

IN THE ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, AT THEIR SESSION IN 1788,

When the report of a committee of the House, favorable to a petition for the relief of the oppressed slaves, was under consideration.



MR. SPEAKER,

BEFORE I proceed to deliver my sentiments on the subject matter of the report, under consideration, I must entreat the members of this House to hear me with patience, and not to condemn what I may happen to advance in support of the opinion I have formed, until they shall have heard me out. I am conscious, sir, that upon this occasion, I have long established principles to combat, and deep rooted prejudices to defeat; that I have fears and apprehensions to silence, which the acts of former legislatures have sanctioned, and that, (what is equivalent to a host of difficulties,) the popular impressions are against me. But, if I am honored with the same indulgent attention, which the House has been pleased to afford me, on past subjects of deliberation, I do not despair of surmounting all these obstacles, in the common cause of justice, humanity and policy. The report appears to me to have two objects in view: to annihilate the existing restraints on the voluntary emancipation of slaves, and to relieve a particular offspring from the punishment, heretofore inflicted on them, for the mere transgression of their parents. To the whole report, separately and collectively, my hearty assent, my cordial assistance, shall be given. It was the policy of this country, sir, from an early period of colonization, down to

the revolution, to encourage an importation of slaves, for purposes, which, (if conjecture may be indulged,) had been far better answered without their assistance. That this inhuman policy was a disgrace to the colony, a dishonor to the legislature, and a scandal to human nature, we need not, at this enlightened period, labor to prove. The generous mind, that has adequate ideas of the inherent rights of mankind, and knows the value of them, must feel its indignation rise against the shameful traffic, that introduces slavery into a country, which seems to have been designed by Providence, as an asylum for those whom the arm of power had persecuted, and not as a nursery for wretches, stripped of every privilege which heaven intended for its rational creatures, and reduced to a level with—nay, become themselves—the mere goods and chattels of their masters.

Sir, by the eternal principles of natural justice, no master in the state has a right to hold his slave in bondage for a single hour; but the law of the land, which, (however oppressive and unjust, however inconsistent with the great groundwork of the late revolution, and our present frame of government,) we cannot, in prudence, or from a regard to individual rights, abolish, has authorized a slavery, as bad, or perhaps worse than the most absolute, unconditional servitude that ever England knew, in the early ages of its empire, under the tyrannical policy of the Danes, the feudal tenures of the Saxons, or the pure villanage of the Normans. But, Mr. Speaker, because a respect for the peace and safety of the community, and the already injured rights of individuals, forbids a compulsory liberation of these unfortunate creatures, shall we unnecessarily refine upon this gloomy system of bondage, and prevent the owner of a slave from manumitting him, at the only probable period, when the warm feelings of benevolence, and the gentle workings of commiseration dispose him to the generous deed? Sir, the natural character of Maryland is sufficiently

sullied, and dishonored, by barely tolerating slavery: but when it is found, that your laws give every possible encouragement to its continuance to the latest generations, and are ingenious to prevent even its slow and gradual decline, how is the die of the imputation deepened? It may even be thought, that our late glorious struggle for liberty, did not originate in principle, but took its rise from popular caprice, the rage of faction, or the intemperance of party. Let it be remembered, Mr. Speaker, that, even in the days of feudal barbarity, when the minds of men were unexpanded by that liberality of sentiment, which springs from civilization and refinement, such was the antipathy, in England, against private bondage, that, so far from being studious to stop the progress of emancipation, the courts of law, (aided by legislative connivance,) were inventive to liberate by construction. If, for example, a man brought an action against his villain, it was presumed, that he designed to manumit him; and, although perhaps this presumption was, in ninety-nine instances out of a hundred, contrary to the fact, yet, upon this ground alone, were bondmen adjudged to be free.

Sir, I sincerely wish it were in my power to impart my feelings, upon this subject, to those who hear me; they would then acknowledge, that, while the owner was protected in the property of his slave, he might, at the same time, be allowed to relinquish that property to the unhappy subject, whenever he should be so inclined. They would then feel, that denying this privilege was repugnant to every principle of humanity—an everlasting stigma on our government—an act of unequalled barbarity, without a color of policy, or a pretext of necessity, to justify it.

Sir, let gentlemen put it home to themselves, that after Providence has crowned our exertions, in the cause of general freedom, with success, and led us on to independence, through a myriad of dangers, and in defiance of obstacles crowding thick upon each other, we should not so soon forget the principles upon

which we fled to arms, and lose all sense of that interposition of heaven, by which alone we could have been saved from the grasp of arbitrary power. We may talk of liberty in our public councils; and fancy, that we feel reverence for her dictates. We may declaim, with all the vehemence of animated rhetoric, against oppression, and flatter ourselves, that we detest the ugly monster, but so long as we continue to cherish the poisonous weed of partial slavery among us, the world will doubt our sincerity. In the name of heaven, with what face can we call ourselves the friends of equal freedom, and the inherent rights of our species, when we wantonly pass laws inimical to each; when we reject every opportunity of destroying, by silent, imperceptible degrees, the horrid fabric of individual bondage, reared by the mercenary hands of those from whom the sacred flame of liberty received no devotion?

Sir, it is pitiable to reflect, to what wild inconsistencies, to what opposite extremes we are hurried, by the frailty of our nature. Long have I been convinced, that no generous sentiment of which the human heart is capable, no elevated passion of the soul that dignifies mankind, can obtain a uniform and perfect dominion: to-day we may be aroused as one man, by a wonderful and unaccountable sympathy, against the lawless invader of the rights of his fellow-creatures: to-morrow we may be guilty of the same oppression, which we reprobated and resisted in another. Is it, Mr. Speaker, because the complexion of these devoted victims is not quite so delicate as ours; is it because their untutored minds, (humbled and debased by the hereditary yoke,) appear less active and capacious than our own; or, is it, because we have been so habituated to their situation, as to become callous to the horrors of it, that we are determined, whether politic or not, to keep them, till time shall be no more, on a level with the brutes? For "nothing," says Montesquieu, "so much assimilates a man to a brute, as living

among freemen, himself a slave." Call not Maryland a land of liberty; do not pretend, that she has chosen this country as an asylum—that here she has erected her temple, and consecrated her shrine, when here, also, her unhallowed enemy holds his hellish *pandemonium* and our rulers offer sacrifice at his polluted altar. The lily and the bramble may grow in social proximity, but liberty and slavery delight in separation.

Sir, let us figure to ourselves, for a moment, one of these unhappy victims more informed than the rest, pleading, at the bar of this House, the cause of himself and his fellow-sufferers; what would be the language of this orator of nature? Thus, my imagination tells me he would address us.

"We belong, by the policy of the country, to our masters; and submit to our rigorous destiny; we do not ask you to divest them of their property, because we are conscious you have not the power; we do not entreat you to compel an emancipation of us or our posterity, because justice to your fellow-citizens forbids it; we only supplicate you not to arrest the gentle arm of humanity, when it may be stretched forth in our behalf; nor to wage hostilities against that moral or religious conviction, which may at any time incline our masters to give freedom to us, or our unoffending offspring, not to interpose legislative obstacles to the course of voluntary manumission. Thus shall you neither violate the rights of your people, nor endanger the quiet of the community, while you vindicate your public councils, from the imputation of cruelty and the stigma of causeless, unprovoked oppression. We have never," would he argue, "rebelled against our masters; we have never thrown your government into a ferment by struggles to regain the independence of our fathers. We have yielded our necks submissive to the yoke, and, without a murmur, acquiesced in the privation of our native rights. We conjure you, then, in the name of the common parent of mankind, reward us not, for this long and patient acquiescence, by

shutting up the main avenues to our liberation, by withholding from us the poor privilege of benefitting by the kind indulgence, the generous intentions of our superiors."

What could we answer to arguments like these? Silent and peremptory, we might reject the application; but no words could justify the deed.

In vain should we resort to apologies, grounded on the fallacious suggestions of a cautious and timid policy. I would as soon believe the incoherent tale of a schoolboy, who should tell me he had been frightened by a ghost, as that the grant of this permission ought in any degree to alarm us. Are we apprehensive, that these men will become more dangerous, by becoming free? Are we alarmed, lest, by being admitted to the enjoyment of civil rights, they will be inspired with a deadly enmity against the rights of others? Strange, unaccountable paradox! How much more rational would it be, to argue, that the natural enemy of the privileges of freemen, is he who is robbed of them himself! In him the foul demon of jealousy converts the sense of his own debasement into a rancorous hatred for the more auspicious fate of others; while from him, whom you have raised from the degrading situation of a slave, whom you have restored to that rank, in the order of the universe, which the malignity of his fortune prevented him from attaining before, from such a man, (unless his soul be ten thousand times blacker than his complexion,) you may reasonably hope for all the happy effects of the warmest gratitude and love.

Sir, let us not limit our views to the short period of a life in being; let us extend them along the continuous line of endless generations yet to come, how will the millions, that now teem in the womb of futurity, and whom your present laws would doom to the curse of perpetual bondage, feel the inspiration of gratitude to those, whose sacred love of liberty shall have opened the door to their admission within the pale of freedom? Dishonorable to the species is the idea, that

they would ever prove injurious to our interests. Released from the shackles of slavery, by the justice of government, and the bounty of individuals, the want of fidelity and attachment, would be next to impossible.

Sir, when we talk of policy, it would be well for us to reflect, whether pride is not at the bottom of it; whether we do not feel our vanity and self-consequence wounded at the idea of a dusty African, participating, equally with ourselves, in the rights of human nature, and rising to a level with us, from the lowest point of degradation. Prejudices of this kind, sir, are often so powerful, as to persuade us, that whatever counter-weighs them, is the extremity of folly, and that the peculiar path of wisdom, is that which leads to their gratification. But it is for us to be superior to the influence of such ungenerous motives; it is for us to reflect, that whatever the complexion, however ignoble the ancestry, or uncultivated the mind, one universal father gave being to them and us; and, with that being, conferred the unalienable rights of the species. But I have heard it argued, that if you permit a master to manumit his slaves by his last will and testament, as soon as they discover he has done so, they will destroy him, to prevent a revocation—never was a weaker defence attempted, to justify the severity of persecution; never did a bigoted inquisition condemn a heretic to torture and to death, upon grounds less adequate to justify the horrid sentence. Sir, is it not obvious, that the argument applies equally against all devices, whatsoever, for any person's benefit? For, if an advantageous bequest is made, even to a white man, has he not the same temptation, to cut short the life of his benefactor, to secure and accelerate the enjoyment of the benefit?

As the universality of this argument renders it completely nugatory, so is its cruelty palpable, by its being more applicable to other instances, to which it has never been applied at all, than to the case under consideration.

AN ORATION,

PRONOUNCED JULY 4th, 1793,

AT THE REQUEST OF THE INHABITANTS OF THE TOWN OF
BOSTON, IN COMMEMORATION OF THE ANNIVERSARY
OF AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE,

BY JOHN QUINCY ADAMS.



It has been a custom, sanctioned by the universal practice of civilized nations, to celebrate, with anniversary solemnities, the return of the days which have been distinguished by events the most important to the happiness of the people. In countries where the natural dignity of mankind, has been degraded by the weakness of bigotry, or debased by the miseries of despotism, this customary celebration has degenerated into a servile mockery of festivity upon the birthday of a sceptered tyrant, or has dwindled to an unmeaning revel, in honor of some canonized fanatic, of whom nothing now remains but the name, in the calendar of antiquated superstition. In those more fortunate regions of the earth where liberty has condescended to reside, the cheerful gratitude of her favored people has devoted to innocent gayety and useful relaxation from the toils of virtuous industry the periodical revolution of those days which have been rendered illustrious by the triumphs of freedom.

Americans! such is the nature of the institution which again calls your attention to celebrate the establishment of your national independence. And surely since the creation of the heavenly orb which separated the day from the night, amid the unnumbered events which have diversified the history of the human race, none has ever occurred more highly deserving of cele-

bration, by every species of ceremonial, that can testify a sense of gratitude to the Deity, and of happiness, derived from his transcendent favors.

It is a wise and salutary institution, which forcibly recalls to the memory of freemen, the principles upon which they originally founded their laboring plan of state. It is a sacrifice at the altar of liberty herself; a renewal of homage to the sovereign, who alone is worthy of our veneration; a profession of political fidelity, expressive of our adherence to those maxims of liberal submission and obedient freedom, which in these favored climes, have harmonized the long contending claims of liberty and law. By a frequent recurrence to those sentiments and actions upon which the glory and felicity of the nation rest supported, we are enabled to renew the moments of bliss which we are not permitted to retain; we secure a permanency to the exaltation of what the constitution of nature has rendered fleeting, and a perennial existence to enjoyments which the lot of humanity has made transitory.

The "feelings, manners and principles," which led to the independence of our country; such, my friends and fellow-citizens, is the theme of our present commemoration. The field is extensive; it is fruitful: but the copious treasures of its fragrance have already been gathered by the hands of genius; and there now remains for the gleanings of mental indigence, nought but the thinly scattered sweets which have escaped the vigilance of their industry.

They were the same feelings, manners and principles, which conducted our venerable forefathers from the unhallowed shores of oppression; which inspired them with the sublime purpose of converting the forests of a wilderness into the favorite mansion of liberty; of unfolding the gates of a new world as a refuge for the victims of persecution in the old:—the feelings of injured freedom, the manners of social equality, and the principles of eternal justice.

Had the sovereigns of England pursued the policy prescribed by their interest, had they not provoked the hostilities of their colonists against the feeble fortress of their authority, they might perhaps have retained, to this day, an empire which would have been but the more durable, for resting only upon the foundation of immemorial custom and national affection.

Incumbered, however, with the oppressive glory of a successful war, which had enriched the pride of Britain with the spoils of her own opulence, and replenished the arrogance in proportion as it had exhausted the resources of the nation; an adventurous ministry, catching at every desperate expedient to support the ponderous burden of the national dignity, and stimulated by the perfidious instigations of their dependents in America, abandoned the profitable commercial policy of their predecessors, and superadded to the lucrative system of monopoly, which we had always tolerated as the price of their protection, a system of internal taxation from which they hoped to derive a fund for future corruption, and a supply for future extravagance.

The nation eagerly grasped at the proposal. The situation, the condition, the sentiments of the colonies, were subjects upon which the people of Britain were divided between ignorance and error. The endearing ties of consanguinity, which had connected their ancestors with those of the Americans, had been gradually loosened to the verge of dissolution, by the slow, but ceaseless hand of time. Instead of returning the sentiments of fraternal affection, which animated the Americans, they indulged their vanity with preposterous opinions of insulting superiority: they considered us, not as fellow-subjects, equally entitled with themselves, to every privilege of Englishmen, but as wretched outcasts, upon whom they might safely load the burden, while they reserved to themselves the advantages of the national grandeur. It has been observed, that nations the most highly favored with freedom,

have not always been the most friendly to the liberty of others. The people of Britain expected to feel none of the oppression, which a parliamentary tyranny might impose upon the Americans; on the contrary, they expected an alleviation of their burden, from the accumulation of ours, and vainly hoped, that by the stripes inflicted upon us, their wounds would be healed.

The king—need it be said, that he adopted as the offspring of his own affections, a plan so favorable to the natural propensity of royalty towards arbitrary power? Depending upon the prostituted valor of his mercenary legions, he was deaf to the complaints, he was inexorable to the remonstrances of violated freedom. Born and educated to the usual prejudices of hereditary dominion, and habitually accustomed to the siren song of adulation, he was ready to believe what the courtly tribe, about his throne, did not fail to assure him—that complaint was nothing more than the murmur of sedition, and remonstrance the clamor of rebellion.

But they knew not the people with whom they had to contend. A people, sagacious and enlightened to discern, cool and deliberate to discuss, firm and resolute to maintain their rights. From the first appearance of the system of parliamentary oppression, under the form of a stamp-act, it was met by the determined opposition of the whole American continent. The annals of other nations have produced instances of successful struggles to break a yoke previously imposed; but the records of history did not, perhaps, furnish an example of a people whose penetration had anticipated the operations of tyranny, and whose spirit had disdained to suffer an experiment upon their liberties. The ministerial partizans had flattered themselves with the expectation, that the Act would execute itself; that before the hands of freedom could be raised to repel the usurpation, they would be loaded with fetters; that the American Samson would be shorn of his locks while asleep; and when thus bereaved of

his strength, might be made their sport with impunity. Vain illusion! Instantaneous and forceful as an electric spark, the fervid spirit of resistance pervaded every part of the country; and at the moment, when the operation of the system was intended to commence, it was indignantly rejected by three millions of men; high-minded men, determined to sacrifice their existence, rather than resign the liberty, from which all its enjoyments were derived.

It is unnecessary to pursue the detail of obstinacy and cruelty on the one part, of perseverance and fortitude on the other, until the period when every chord which had bound the two countries together, was destroyed by the violence of reciprocal hostilities, and the representatives of America, adopted the measure, which was already dictated by the wishes of their constituents; they declared the United Colonies free, sovereign and independent states.

Americans! let us pause for a moment to consider the situation of our country, at that eventful day when our national existence commenced. In the full possession and enjoyment of all those prerogatives for which you then dared to adventure upon "all the varieties of untried being," the calm and settled moderation of the mind, is scarcely competent to conceive the tone of heroism, to which the souls of freemen were exalted in that hour of perilous magnanimity. Seventeen times has the sun, in the progress of his annual revolutions, diffused his prolific radiance over the plains of independent America. Millions of hearts, which then palpitated with the rapturous glow of patriotism, have already been translated to brighter worlds—to the abodes of more than mortal freedom. Other millions have arisen to receive from their parents and benefactors, the inestimable recompense of their achievements. A large proportion of the audience, whose benevolence is at this moment listening to the speaker of the day, like him were at that period too little advanced beyond the threshold of life to partake of the divine

enthusiasm which inspired the American bosom; which prompted her voice to proclaim defiance to the thunders of Britain; which consecrated the banners of her armies; and finally erected the holy temple of American liberty, over the tomb of departed tyranny. It is from those who have already passed the meridian of life, it is from you, ye venerable asserters of the rights of mankind, that we are to be informed, what were the feelings which swayed within your breasts and impelled you to action, when, like the stripling of Israel, with scarce a weapon to attack and without a shield for your defence, you met, and undismayed, engaged with the gigantic greatness of the British power. Untutored in the disgraceful science of human butchery; destitute of the fatal materials which the ingenuity of man has combined, to sharpen the scythe of death; unsupported by the arm of any friendly alliance; and unfortified against the powerful assaults of an unrelenting enemy, you did not hesitate at that moment, when your coasts were infested by a formidable fleet, when your territories were invaded by a numerous and veteran army, to pronounce the sentence of eternal separation from Britain, and to throw the gauntlet at a power, the terror of whose recent triumphs was almost co-extensive with the earth. The interested and selfish propensities, which in times of prosperous tranquillity have such powerful dominion over the heart, were all expelled; and in their stead, the public virtues, the spirit of personal devotion to the common cause, a contempt of every danger in comparison with the subserviency of the country, had assumed an unlimited control. The passion for the public, had absorbed all the rest; as the glorious luminary of heaven extinguishes in a flood of refulgence the twinkling splendor of every inferior planet. Those of you, my countrymen, who were actors in those interesting scenes, will best know, how feeble, and impotent is the language of this description to express the impassioned emotions of the soul, with which you were then agitated; yet it were

injustice to conclude from thence, or from the greater prevalence of private and personal motives in these days of calm serenity, that your sons have degenerated from the virtues of their fathers. Let it rather be a subject of pleasing reflection to you, that the generous and disinterested energies, which you were summoned to display, are permitted by the bountiful indulgence of heaven to remain latent in the bosoms of your children. From the present prosperous appearance of our public affairs, we may admit a rational hope that our country will have no occasion to require of us those extraordinary and heroic exertions which it was your fortune to exhibit. But from the common versatility of all human destiny, should the prospect hereafter be darkened, and the clouds of public misfortune thicken to a tempest; should the voice of our country's calamity ever call us to her relief, we swear by the precious memory of the sages who toiled, and of the heroes who bled in her defence, that we will prove ourselves not unworthy the prize, which they so dearly purchased; that we will act as the faithful disciples of those who so magnanimously taught us the instructive lesson of republican virtue.

Seven years of ineffectual hostility, a hundred millions of treasure fruitlessly expended, and uncounted thousands of human lives sacrificed to no purpose, at length taught the dreadful lesson of wisdom to the British government, and compelled them to relinquish a claim which they had long since been unable to maintain. The pride of Britain, which should have been humbled, was only mortified. With sullen impotence, she yielded to the pressure of accumulated calamity, and closed with reluctance an inglorious war, in which she had often been the object, and rarely the actor of a triumph.

The various occurrences of our national history, since that period, are within the recollection of all my hearers. The relaxation and debility of the political body, which succeeded the violent exertions it had

made during the war: the total inefficacy of the commendatory federal system, which had been formed in the bosom of contention: the peaceable and deliberate adoption of a more effectual national constitution by the people of the union, and the prosperous administration of that government, which has repaired the shattered fabric of public confidence, which has strengthened the salutary bands of national union, and restored the bloom and vigor of impartial justice to the public countenance, afford a subject of pleasing contemplation to the patriotic mind. The repeated unanimity of the nation has placed at the head of the American councils, the heroic leader, whose prudence and valor conducted to victory the armies of freedom: and the two first offices of this commonwealth, still exhibit the virtues and employ the talents of the venerable patriots,* whose firm and disinterested devotion to the cause of Liberty, was rewarded by the honorable distinction of a British proscription. Americans! the voice of grateful freedom is a stranger to the language of adulation. While we wish these illustrious sages to be assured that the memory of their services is impressed upon all our hearts, in characters, indelible to the latest period of time, we trust that the most acceptable tribute of respect, which can be offered to their virtues, is found in the confidence of their countrymen. From the fervent admiration of future ages, when the historians of America, shall trace from their examples the splendid pattern of public virtue, their merits will receive a recompense of much more precious estimation than can be conferred by the most flattering testimonials of contemporaneous applause.

The magnitude and importance of the great event which we commemorate, derives a vast accession from its influence upon the affairs of the world, and its operation upon the history of mankind. It has already

* John Hancock and Samuel Adams, the two distinguished leaders of the republicans in Massachusetts.

been observed that the origin of the American revolution bears a character different from that of any other civil contest, that has ever arisen among men. It was not the convulsive struggle of slavery to throw off the burden of accumulated oppression ; but the deliberate, though energetic effort of freemen, to repel the insidious approaches of tyranny. It was a contest involving the elementary principles of government—a question of right between the sovereign and the subject which, in its progress, had a tendency to introduce among the civilized nations of Europe, the discussion of a topic the first in magnitude, which can attract the attention of mankind, but which, for many centuries, the gloomy shades of despotism had overspread with impenetrable darkness. The French nation cheerfully supported an alliance with the United States, and a war with Britain, during the course of which a large body of troops and considerable fleets were sent by the French government, to act in conjunction with their new allies. The union, which had at first been formed by the coalescence of a common enmity, was soon strengthened by the bonds of a friendly intercourse, and the subjects of an arbitrary prince, in fighting the battles of freedom, soon learned to cherish the cause of liberty itself. By a natural and easy application to themselves of the principles upon which the Americans asserted the justice of their warfare, they were led to inquire into the nature of the obligation which prescribed their submission to their own sovereign ; and when they discovered that the consent of the people is the only legitimate source of authority, they necessarily drew the conclusion, that their own obedience was no more than the compulsive acquiescence of servitude ; and they waited only for a favorable opportunity to recover the possession of those enjoyments, to which they had never forfeited the right. Sentiments of a similar nature, by a gradual and imperceptible progress, secretly undermined all the foundations of their government ; and when the necessities of the sove-

reign reduced him to the inevitable expedient of appealing to the benevolence of the people, the magic talisman of despotism was broken, the spell of prescriptive tyranny was dissolved, and the pompous pageant of their monarchy, instantaneously crumbled to atoms.

The subsequent European events, which have let slip the dogs of war, to prey upon the vitals of humanity; which have poured the torrent of destruction over the fairest harvests of European fertility; which have unbound the pinions of desolation, and sent her forth to scatter pestilence and death among the nations; the scaffold smoking with the blood of a fallen monarch; the corpse-covered field, where agonizing nature struggles with the pangs of dissolution—permit me, my happy countrymen, to throw a pall over objects like these, which could only spread a gloom upon the face of our festivity. Let us rather indulge the pleasing and rational anticipation of the period, when all the nations of Europe shall partake of the blessings of equal liberty and universal peace. Whatever issue may be destined by the will of heaven, to await the termination of the present European commotions, the system of feudal absurdity has received an irrecoverable wound, and every symptom indicates its approaching dissolution. The seeds of liberty are plentifully sown. However severe the climate, however barren the soil of the regions in which they have been received, such is the native exuberance of the plant, that it must eventually flourish with luxuriant profusion. The governments of Europe must fall; and the only remaining expedient in their power, is to gather up their garments and fall with decency. The bonds of civil subjection must be loosened by the discretion of civil authority, or they will be shivered by the convulsive efforts of slavery itself. The feelings of benevolence involuntarily make themselves a party to every circumstance that can affect the happiness of mankind; they are ever ready to realize the sanguine hope, that

the governments to rise upon the ruins of the present systems, will be immutably founded upon the principles of freedom, and administered by the genuine maxims of moral subordination and political equality. We cherish, with a fondness which cannot be chilled by the cold, unanimated philosophy of scepticism, the delightful expectation, that the cancer of arbitrary power will be radically extracted from the human constitution; that the sources of oppression will be drained; that the passions, which have hitherto made the misery of mankind, will be disarmed of all their violence, and give place to the soft control of mild and amiable sentiments, which shall unite in social harmony the innumerable varieties of the human race. Then shall the nerveless arm of superstition no longer interpose an impious barrier between the beneficence of heaven and the adoration of its votaries; then shall the most distant regions of the earth be approximated by the gentle attraction of a liberal intercourse; then shall the fair fabric of universal liberty rise upon the durable foundation of social equality, and the long expected era of human felicity, which has been announced by prophetic inspiration, and described in the most enraptured language of the muses, shall commence its splendid progress. Visions of bliss! with every breath to heaven we speed an ejaculation, that the time may hasten, when your reality shall be no longer the ground of votive supplication, but the theme of grateful acknowledgment; when the choral gratulations of the liberated myriads of the elder world, in symphony, sweeter than the music of the spheres, shall hail your country, Americans! as the youngest daughter of Nature, and the first-born offspring of Freedom.

FAREWELL ADDRESS

OF

PRESIDENT WASHINGTON,

TO THE PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES.

FRIENDS AND FELLOW-CITIZENS,

THE period for a new election of a citizen, to administer the executive government of the United States, being not far distant, and the time actually arrived, when your thoughts must be employed in designating the person, who is to be clothed with that important trust, it appears to me proper, especially as it may conduce to a more distinct expression of the public voice, that I should now apprize you of the resolution I have formed, to decline being considered among the number of those, out of whom a choice is to be made.

I beg you, at the same time, to do me the justice to be assured, that this resolution has not been taken, without a strict regard to all the considerations appertaining to the relation which binds a dutiful citizen to his country; and that, in withdrawing the tender of service, which silence, in my situation, might imply, I am influenced by no diminution of zeal for your future interest; no deficiency of grateful respect for your past kindness; but am supported by a full conviction, that the step is compatible with both.

The acceptance of, and continuance, hitherto, in the office to which your suffrages have twice called me, have been a uniform sacrifice of inclination to the opinion of duty, and to a deference for what appeared to be your desire. I constantly hoped, that it would have been much earlier in my power, consistently with motives, which I was not at liberty to disregard, to

return to that retirement from which I had been reluctantly drawn. The strength of my inclination to do this, previous to the last election, had even led to the preparation of an address, to declare it to you; but mature reflection on the then perplexed and critical posture of our affairs with foreign nations, and the unanimous advice of persons entitled to my confidence, impelled me to abandon the idea.

I rejoice, that the state of your concerns, external as well as internal, no longer renders the pursuit of inclination incompatible with the sentiment of duty or propriety: and am persuaded, whatever partiality may be retained for my services, that in the present circumstances of our country, you will not disapprove of my determination to retire.

The impressions, with which I first undertook the arduous trust, were explained on the proper occasion. In the discharge of this trust I will only say, that I have with good intentions contributed towards the organization and administration of the government, the best exertions of which a very fallible judgment was capable. Not unconscious, in the outset, of the inferiority of my qualifications, experience, in my own eyes, perhaps still more in the eyes of others, has strengthened the motives to diffidence of myself; and every day the increasing weight of years admonishes me more and more, that the shade of retirement is as necessary to me as it will be welcome. Satisfied, that if any circumstances have given peculiar value to my services, they were temporary, I have the consolation to believe, that while choice and prudence invite me to quit the political scene, patriotism does not forbid it.

In looking forward to the moment which is intended to terminate the career of my public life, my feelings do not permit me to suspend the deep acknowledgment of that debt of gratitude which I owe to my beloved country, for the many honors it has conferred upon me; still more for the steadfast confidence with which it has supported me; and for the opportunities I have

thence enjoyed of manifesting my inviolable attachment, by services, faithful and persevering, though in usefulness unequal to my zeal. If benefits have resulted to our country from these services, let it always be remembered to your praise, and as an instructive example in our annals, that under circumstances in which the passions, agitated in every direction, were liable to mislead, amidst appearances sometimes dubious, vicissitudes of fortune often discouraging, in situations in which not unfrequently want of success has countenanced the spirit of criticism, the constancy of your support was the essential prop of the efforts, and a guarantee of the plans by which they were effected. Profoundly penetrated with this idea, I shall carry it with me to my grave, as a strong incitement to unceasing wishes, that heaven may continue to you the choicest tokens of its beneficence; that your union and brotherly affection may be perpetual; that the free constitution, which is the work of your hands, may be sacredly maintained; that its administration, in every department, may be stamped with wisdom and virtue; that, in fine, the happiness of the people of these states, under the auspices of liberty, may be made complete, by so careful a preservation and so prudent a use of this blessing, as will acquire to them the glory of recommending it to the applause, the affection, and the adoption of every nation which is yet a stranger to it.

Here, perhaps, I ought to stop. But a solicitude for your welfare, which cannot end but with my life, and the apprehension of danger, natural to that solicitude, urge me, on an occasion like the present, to offer to your solemn contemplation, and to recommend to your frequent review, some sentiments, which are the result of much reflection, of no inconsiderable observation, and which appear to me all-important to the permanency of your felicity as a people. These will be offered to you with the more freedom, as you can only see in them the disinterested warnings of a part-

ing friend, who can possibly have no personal motive to bias his counsel. Nor can I forget, as an encouragement to it, your indulgent reception of my sentiments on a former and not dissimilar occasion.

Interwoven as is the love of liberty with every ligament of your hearts, no recommendation of mine is necessary to fortify or confirm the attachment.

The unity of government, which constitutes you one people, is also now dear to you. It is justly so; for it is a main pillar in the edifice of your real independence, the support of your tranquillity at home, your peace abroad, of your safety, of your prosperity, of that very liberty which you so highly prize. But as it is easy to foresee, that, from different causes and from different quarters, much pains will be taken, many artifices employed, to weaken in your minds the conviction of this truth; as this is the point in your political fortress, against which the batteries of internal and external enemies will be most constantly and actively, (though often covertly and insidiously,) directed, it is of infinite moment, that you should properly estimate the immense value of your national union, to your collective and individual happiness; that you should cherish a cordial, habitual and immovable attachment to it; accustoming yourselves to think and speak of it as of the palladium of your political safety and prosperity, watching for its preservation with jealous anxiety; discountenancing whatever may suggest even a suspicion, that it can in any event be abandoned; and indignantly frowning upon the first dawning of every attempt to alienate any portion of our country from the rest, or to enfeeble the sacred ties which now link together the various parts.

For this you have every inducement of sympathy and interest. Citizens, by birth or choice, of a common country, that country has a right to concentrate your affections. The name of American, which belongs to you in your national capacity, must always exalt the just pride of patriotism, more than any appellation de-

rived from local discriminations. With slight shades of difference, you have the same religion, manners, habits and political principles. You have, in a common cause, fought and triumphed together; the independence and liberty you possess, are the work of joint councils and joint efforts, of common dangers, sufferings and successes.

But these considerations, however powerfully they address themselves to your sensibility, are greatly outweighed by those which apply more immediately to your interest. Here every portion of our country finds the most commanding motives for carefully guarding and preserving the union of the whole.

The North, in an unrestrained intercourse with the South, protected by the equal laws of a common government, finds in the productions of the latter, great additional resources of maritime and commercial enterprise, and precious materials of manufacturing industry. The South in the same intercourse, benefiting by the agency of the North, sees its agriculture grow and its commerce expand. Turning partly into its own channels the seamen of the North, it finds its particular navigation invigorated; and while it contributes, in different ways, to nourish and increase the general mass of the national navigation, it looks forward to the protection of a maritime strength, to which itself is unequally adapted. The East, in like intercourse with the West, already finds, and in the progressive improvement of interior communications, by land and water, will more and more find a valuable vent for the commodities which it brings from abroad, or manufactures at home. The West derives from the East supplies requisite to its growth and comfort; and what is, perhaps, of still greater consequence, it must of necessity, owe the secure enjoyment of indispensable outlets for its own productions, to the weight, influence and the future maritime strength of the Atlantic side of the union, directed by an indissoluble community of interest as one nation. Any other tenure, by which the

West can hold this essential advantage, whether derived from its own separate strength, or from an apostate and unnatural connexion with any foreign power, must be intrinsically precarious.

While, then, every part of our country thus feels an immediate and particular interest in union, all the parties combined cannot fail to find, in the united mass of means and efforts, greater strength, greater resource, proportionably greater security from external danger, a less frequent interruption of their peace by foreign nations; and what is of inestimable value, they must derive from union an exemption from those broils and wars between themselves, which so frequently afflict neighboring countries, not tied together by the same government, which their own rivalships alone would be sufficient to produce, but which opposite foreign alliances, attachments and intrigues, would stimulate and embitter. Hence, likewise, they will avoid the necessity of those overgrown military establishments, which, under any form of government, are inauspicious to liberty, and which are to be regarded as particularly hostile to republican liberty. In this sense it is, that your union ought to be considered as a main prop of your liberty, and that the love of the one ought to endear to you the preservation of the other.

These considerations speak a persuasive language to every reflecting and virtuous mind, and exhibit the continuance of the union as a primary object of patriotic desire. Is there a doubt, whether a common government can embrace so large a sphere? Let experience solve it. To listen to mere speculation, in such a case, were criminal. We are authorized to hope, that a proper organization of the whole, with the auxiliary agency of governments for the respective subdivisions, will afford a happy issue to the experiment. 'Tis well worth a fair and full experiment. With such powerful and obvious motives to union, affecting all parts of our country, while experience shall not have

demonstrated its impracticability, there will always be reason to distrust the patriotism of those, who, in any quarter, may endeavor to weaken its bands.

In contemplating the causes which may disturb our union, it occurs, as a matter of serious concern, that any ground should have been furnished for characterizing parties by geographical discriminations—Northern and Southern—Atlantic and Western : whence designing men may endeavor to excite a belief, that there is a real difference of local interests and views. One of the expedients of party to acquire influence, within particular districts, is to misrepresent the opinions and aims of other districts. You cannot shield yourselves too much against the jealousies and heart-burnings which spring from these misrepresentations : they tend to render alien to each other, those who ought to be bound together by fraternal affection. The inhabitants of our western country have lately had a useful lesson on this head : they have seen, in the negotiation, by the executive, and in the unanimous ratification, by the senate, of the treaty with Spain, and in the universal satisfaction of that event, throughout the United States, a decisive proof how unfounded were the suspicions, propagated among them, of a policy in the general government, and in the Atlantic states, unfriendly to their interests in regard to the Mississippi : they have been witnesses to the formation of two treaties, that with Great Britain and that with Spain, which secure to them every thing they could desire, in respect to our foreign relations, towards confirming their prosperity. Will it not be their wisdom to rely, for the preservation of these advantages, on the union by which they were procured ? Will they not henceforth be deaf to those advisers, if such there are, who would sever them from their brethren, and connect them with aliens ?

To the efficacy and permanency of your union, a government for the whole is indispensable. No alliances, however strict, between the parts, can be an

adequate substitute; they must inevitably experience the infractions and interruptions, which all alliances, in all times, have experienced. Sensible of this momentous truth, you have improved upon your first essay, by the adoption of a constitution of government, better calculated than your former, for an intimate union, and for the efficacious management of your common concerns. This government, the offspring of our own choice, uninfluenced and unawed, adopted upon full investigation and mature deliberation, completely free in its principles, in the distribution of its powers, uniting security with energy, and containing within itself a provision for its own amendment, has a just claim to your confidence and your support. Respect for its authority, compliance with its laws, acquiescence in its measures, are duties enjoined by the fundamental maxims of true liberty. The basis of our political systems is, the right of the people to make and to alter their constitutions of government. But the constitution, which at any time exists, until changed by an explicit and authentic act of the whole people, is sacredly obligatory upon all. The very idea of the power and the right of the people to establish a government, presupposes the duty of every individual to obey the established government.

All obstructions to the execution of the laws, all combinations and associations, under whatever plausible character, with the real design to direct, control, counteract, or awe the regular deliberation and action of the constituted authorities, are destructive of this fundamental principle, and of fatal tendency. They serve to organize faction, to give it an artificial and extraordinary force, to put in the place of the delegated will of the nation, the will of a party, often a small, but artful and enterprising minority of the community; and according to the alternate triumphs of different parties, to make the public administration the mirror of the ill-concerted and incongruous projects of faction, rather than the organ of consistent and whole-

some plans, digested by common councils, and modified by mutual interests.

However combinations or associations of the above description may now and then answer popular ends, they are likely, in the course of time and things, to become potent engines, by which cunning, ambitious and unprincipled men will be enabled to subvert the power of the people, and to usurp for themselves the reins of government; destroying afterwards the very engines which have lifted them to unjust dominion.

Towards the preservation of your government, and the permanency of your present happy state, it is requisite, not only that you speedily discountenance irregular oppositions to its acknowledged authority, but also that you resist with care the spirit of innovation upon its principles, however specious the pretexts. One method of assault may be to effect, in the forms of the constitution, alterations which will impair the energy of the system; and thus to undermine what cannot be directly overthrown. In all the changes to which you may be invited, remember that time and habit are at least as necessary to fix the true character of governments, as of other human institutions; that experience is the surest standard, by which to test the real tendency of the existing constitution of a country; that facility in changes, upon the credit of mere hypothesis and opinion, exposes to perpetual change, from the endless variety of hypothesis and opinion. And remember, especially, that for the efficient management of your common interests, in a country so extensive as ours, a government of as much vigor as is consistent with the perfect security of liberty, is indispensable. Liberty itself will find in such a government, with powers properly distributed and adjusted, its surest guardian. It is, indeed, little else than a name, where the government is too feeble to withstand the enterprizes of faction; to confine each member of the society within the limits prescribed by the laws, and to maintain all in the secure and tranquil enjoyment of the rights of person and property.

I have already intimated to you the danger of parties in the state, with particular reference to the founding of them on geographical discriminations. Let me now take a more comprehensive view, and warn you, in the most solemn manner, against the baneful effects of the spirit of party, generally.

This spirit, unfortunately, is inseparable from our nature, having its root in the strongest passions of the human mind. It exists under different shapes, in all governments, more or less stifled, controlled, or repressed. But in those of the popular form, it is seen in its greatest rankness, and is truly their worst enemy.

The alternate domination of one faction over another, sharpened by the spirit of revenge, natural to party dissension, which, in different ages and countries, has perpetrated the most horrid enormities, is itself a frightful despotism. But this leads, at length, to a more formal and permanent despotism. The disorders and miseries, which result, gradually incline the minds of men to seek security and repose in the absolute power of an individual; and sooner or later, the chief of some prevailing faction, more able or more fortunate than his competitors, turns this disposition to the purposes of his own elevation on the ruins of public liberty.

Without looking forward to an extremity of this kind, (which, nevertheless, ought not to be out of sight,) the common and continual mischiefs of the spirit of party, are sufficient to make it the interest and duty of a wise people, to discourage and restrain it.

It serves always to distract the public councils, and enfeeble the public administration. It agitates the community with ill-founded jealousies and false alarms; kindles the animosity of one part against another; foment, occasionally, riot and insurrection. It opens the door to foreign influence and corruption, which find a facilitated access to the government itself

through the channels of party passions. Thus the policy and the will of one country are subjected to the policy and will of another.

There is an opinion, that parties, in free countries, are useful checks upon the administration of the government and serve to keep alive the spirit of liberty. This, within certain limits, is probably true; and, in governments of a monarchical cast, patriotism may look with indulgence, if not with favor, upon the spirit of party. But in those of the popular character, in governments purely elective, it is a spirit not to be encouraged. From their natural tendency, it is certain there will always be enough of that spirit for every salutary purpose. And there being constant danger of excess, the effort ought to be, by force of public opinion, to mitigate and assuage it. A fire not to be quenched, it demands a uniform vigilance to prevent its bursting into a flame, lest, instead of warming, it should consume.

It is important, likewise, that the habits of thinking, in a free country, should inspire caution in those entrusted with its administration, to confine themselves within their respective constitutional spheres, avoiding, in the exercise of the powers of one department, to encroach upon another. The spirit of encroachment tends to consolidate the powers of all the departments in one, and thus to create, whatever the form of government, a real despotism. A just estimate of that love of power, and proneness to abuse it, which predominates in the human heart, is sufficient to satisfy us of the truth of this position. The necessity of reciprocal checks in the exercise of political power, by dividing and distributing it into different depositaries, and constituting each the guardian of the public weal against invasion by the others, has been evinced by experiments ancient and modern: some of them in our country, and under our own eyes. To preserve them, must be as necessary, as to institute them. If, in the opinion of the people, the distribution or modi-

fication of the constitutional powers, be, in any particular, wrong, let it be corrected by an amendment in the way which the constitution designates. But let there be no change by usurpation; for though this, in one instance, may be the instrument of good, it is the customary weapon by which free governments are destroyed. The precedent must always greatly overbalance, in permanent evil, any partial or transient benefit which the use can at any time yield.

Of all the dispositions and habits, which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports. In vain would that man claim the tribute of patriotism, who should labor to subvert these great pillars of human happiness, these firmest props of the destinies of men and citizens. The mere politician, equally with the pious man, ought to respect and to cherish them. A volume could not trace all their connexions with private and public felicity. Let it simply be asked, where is the security for property, for reputation, for life, if the sense of religious obligation desert the oaths, which are the instruments of investigation in courts of justice? And let us with caution indulge the supposition, that morality can be maintained without religion. Whatever may be conceded to the influence of refined education on minds of peculiar structure; reason and experience both forbid us to expect, that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principles.

It is substantially true, that virtue or morality is a necessary spring of popular government. The rule, indeed, extends with more or less force to every species of free government. Who, that is a sincere friend to it, can look with indifference upon attempts to shake the foundation of the fabric?

Promote, then, as an object of primary importance, institutions for the general diffusion of knowledge. In proportion as the structure of a government gives force to public opinion, it is essential that public opinion should be enlightened.

As a very important source of strength and security, cherish public credit. One method of preserving it is to use it as sparingly as possible; avoiding occasions of expense by cultivating peace, but remembering also that timely disbursements to prepare for danger, frequently prevent much greater disbursements to repel it; avoiding likewise the accumulation of debt, not only by shunning occasions of expense, but by vigorous exertions in time of peace to discharge the debts which unavoidable wars may have occasioned, not ungenerously throwing upon posterity the burden which we ourselves ought to bear. The execution of these maxims belongs to your representatives, but it is necessary that public opinion should co-operate. To facilitate to them the performance of their duty, it is essential that you should practically bear in mind, that towards the payment of debts there must be revenue; that to have revenue there must be taxes; that no taxes can be devised which are not more or less inconvenient and unpleasant; that the intrinsic embarrassment, inseparable from the selection of the proper objects, (which is always the choice of difficulties,) ought to be a decisive motive for a candid construction of the conduct of the government in making it, and for a spirit of acquiescence in the measures for obtaining revenue which the public exigencies may at any time dictate.

Observe good faith and justice towards all nations; cultivate peace and harmony with all: religion and morality enjoin this conduct; and can it be that good policy does not equally enjoin it? It will be worthy of a free, enlightened and, at no distant period, a great nation, to give to mankind the magnanimous and too novel example of a people always guided by an exalted justice and benevolence. Who can doubt that, in the course of time and things, the fruits of such a plan would richly repay any temporary advantages which might be lost by a steady adherence to it? Can it be, that Providence has not connected the permanent felicity

of a nation with its virtue? The experiment, at least, is recommended by every sentiment which ennobles human nature. Alas! is it rendered impossible by its vices?

In the execution of such a plan, nothing is more essential than that permanent, inveterate antipathies against particular nations, and passionate attachments for others, should be excluded; and that in place of them, just and amicable feelings towards all should be cultivated. The nation, which indulges towards another an habitual hatred, or an habitual fondness, is in some degree a slave. It is a slave to its animosity or to its affection, either of which is sufficient to lead it astray from its duty and its interest. Antipathy in one nation against another, disposes each more readily to offer insult and injury, to lay hold of slight causes of umbrage, and to be haughty and intractable, when accidental or trifling occasions of dispute occur.

Hence frequent collisions, obstinate, envenomed and bloody contests. The nation, prompted by ill will and resentment, sometimes impels to war the government, contrary to the best calculations of policy. The government sometimes participates in the national propensity, and adopts through passion what reason would reject; at other times, it makes the animosity of the nation subservient to projects of hostility instigated by pride, ambition and other sinister and pernicious motives. The peace often, and sometimes, perhaps, the liberty of nations has been the victim.

So, likewise, a passionate attachment of one nation for another, produces a variety of evils. Sympathy for the favorite nation facilitating the illusion of an imaginary common interest in cases where no real common interest exists, and infusing into one the enmities of the other, betrays the former into a participation in the quarrels and wars of the latter, without adequate inducement or justification. It leads also to concessions to the favorite nation of privileges denied to

others, which is apt doubly to injure the nation making the concessions; by unnecessarily parting with what ought to have been retained; and by exciting jealousy, ill will and a disposition to retaliate, in the parties from whom equal privileges are withheld; and it gives to ambitious, corrupted, or deluded citizens, (who devote themselves to the favorite nation,) facility to betray, or sacrifice the interests of their own country, without odium, sometimes even with popularity; gilding, with the appearances of a virtuous sense of obligation, a commendable deference for public opinion, or laudable zeal for public good, the base or foolish compliances of ambition, corruption, or infatuation.

As avenues to foreign influence, in innumerable ways, such attachments are particularly alarming to the truly enlightened and independent patriot. How many opportunities do they afford to tamper with domestic factions; to practise the arts of seduction; to mislead public opinion; to influence or awe the public councils! Such an attachment of a small or weak; towards a great and powerful nation, dooms the former to be the satellite of the latter.

Against the insidious wiles of foreign influence, (I conjure you to believe me, fellow-citizens,) the jealousy of a free people ought to be constantly awake; since history and experience prove, that foreign influence is one of the most baneful foes of republican government. But that jealousy, to be useful, must be impartial; else it becomes the instrument of the very influence to be avoided, instead of a defence against it. Excessive partiality for one foreign nation, and excessive dislike of another, cause those whom they actuate, to see danger only on one side; and serve to veil and even second the arts of influence on the other. Real patriots, who may resist the intrigues of the favorite, are liable to become suspected and odious; while its tools and dupes usurp the applause and confidence of the people, to surrender their interests.

The great rule of conduct for us, in regard to for-

sign nations is, in extending our commercial relations, to have with them as little political connexion as possible. So far as we have already formed engagements, let them be fulfilled with perfect good faith. Here let us stop.

Europe has a set of primary interests, which to us have none, or a very remote relation. Hence she must be engaged in frequent controversies, the causes of which are essentially foreign to our concerns. Hence, therefore, it must be unwise in us to implicate ourselves, by artificial ties, in the ordinary vicissitudes of her politics, or the ordinary combinations and collisions of her friendships or enmities.

Our detached and distant situation invites and enables us to pursue a different course. If we remain one people, under an efficient government, the period is not far off, when we may defy material injury from external annoyance; when we may take such an attitude as will cause the neutrality we may at any time resolve upon, to be scrupulously respected; when belligerent nations, under the impossibility of making acquisitions upon us, will not lightly hazard the giving us provocation; when we may choose peace or war, as our interest, guided by justice, shall counsel.

Why forego the advantages of so peculiar a situation? Why quit our own, to stand upon foreign ground? Why, by interweaving our destiny with that of any part of Europe, entangle our peace and prosperity in the toils of European ambition, rivalry, interest, humor, or caprice?

'Tis our true policy to steer clear of permanent alliances with any portion of the foreign world; so far, I mean, as we are now at liberty to do it; for let me not be understood as capable of patronizing infidelity to existing engagements. I hold the maxim no less applicable to public than to private affairs, that honesty is always the best policy. I repeat it, therefore, let those engagements be observed in their genuine sense.

But, in my opinion, it is unnecessary, and would be unwise, to extend them.

Taking care always to keep ourselves, by suitable establishments, in a respectable defensive posture, we may safely trust to temporary alliances for extraordinary emergencies.

Harmony, and a liberal intercourse with all nations, are recommended by policy, humanity and interest. But even our commercial policy should hold an equal and impartial hand; neither seeking nor granting exclusive favors or preferences; consulting the natural course of things; diffusing and diversifying, by gentle means, the streams of commerce, but forcing nothing; establishing, with powers so disposed, in order to give trade a stable course, to define the rights of our merchants, and to enable the government to support them, conventional rules of intercourse, the best that present circumstances and mutual opinion will permit, but temporary, and liable to be, from time to time, abandoned or varied, as experience and circumstances shall dictate; constantly keeping in view, that it is folly in one nation to look for disinterested favors from another; that it must pay, with a portion of its independence, for whatever it may accept under that character; that, by such acceptance, it may place itself in the condition of having given equivalents for nominal favors, and yet of being reproached with ingratitude for not giving more. There can be no greater error than to expect or calculate upon real favors from nation to nation. It is an illusion, which experience must cure, which a just pride ought to discard.

In offering to you, my countrymen, these counsels of an old and affectionate friend, I dare not hope they will make the strong and lasting impression I could wish; that they will control the usual current of the passions, or prevent our nation from running the course which has hitherto marked the destiny of nations! But, if I may even flatter myself, that they may be productive of some partial benefit, some oc-

casional good; that they may now and then recur to moderate the fury of party spirit; to warn against the mischiefs of foreign intrigues; to guard against the impostures of pretended patriotism; this hope will be a full recompense for the solicitude for your welfare, by which they have been dictated.

How far, in the discharge of my official duties, I have been guided by the principles which have been delineated, the public records and other evidences of my conduct must witness to you and to the world. To myself, the assurance of my own conscience is, that I have, at least, believed myself to be guided by them.

In relation to the still subsisting war in Europe, my proclamation of the 22d of April, 1793, is the index to my plan. Sanctioned by your approving voice, and by that of your representatives in both Houses of Congress, the spirit of that measure has continually governed me, uninfluenced by any attempts to deter or divert me from it.

After deliberate examination, with the aid of the best lights I could obtain, I was well satisfied, that our country, under all the circumstances of the case, had a right to take, and was bound in duty and interest to take, a neutral position. Having taken it, I determined, as far as should depend upon me, to maintain it with moderation, perseverance and firmness.

The considerations, which respect the right to hold this conduct, it is not necessary, on this occasion, to detail. I will only observe, that, according to my understanding of the matter, that right, so far from being denied by any of the belligerent powers, has been virtually admitted by all.

The duty of holding a neutral conduct may be inferred, without any thing more, from the obligation which justice and humanity impose on every nation, in cases in which it is free to act, to maintain inviolate the relations of peace and amity towards other nations.

The inducements of interest for observing that con-

duct, will best be referred to your own reflection and experience. With me, a predominant motive has been, to endeavor to gain time to our country to settle and mature its yet recent institutions, and to progress, without interruption, to that degree of strength and consistency, which is necessary to give it, humanly speaking, the command of its own fortunes.

Though, in reviewing the incidents of my administration, I am unconscious of intentional error, I am, nevertheless, too sensible of my defects, not to think it probable, that I may have committed many errors. Whatever they may be, I fervently beseech the Almighty to avert or mitigate the evils to which they may tend. I shall also carry with me the hope, that my country will never cease to view them with indulgence; and that, after forty-five years of my life dedicated to its service, with an upright zeal, the faults of incompetent abilities will be consigned to oblivion, as myself must soon be to the mansions of rest.

Relying on its kindness in this, as in other things, and actuated by that fervent love towards it, which is so natural to a man, who views in it the native soil of himself and his progenitors for several generations, I anticipate, with pleasing expectation, that retreat, in which I promise myself to realize, without alloy, the sweet enjoyment of partaking, in the midst of my fellow-citizens, the benign influence of good laws under a free government—the ever favorite object of my heart, and the happy reward, as I trust, of our mutual cares, labors and dangers.

EULOGY ON WASHINGTON,

DELIVERED AT THE REQUEST OF CONGRESS,

BY HENRY LEE,

MEMBER OF CONGRESS FROM VIRGINIA.



IN obedience to your will, I rise your humble organ, with the hope of executing a part of the system of public mourning which you have been pleased to adopt, commemorative of the death of the most illustrious and most beloved personage this country has ever produced; and which, while it transmits to posterity your sense of the awful event, faintly represents your knowledge of the consummate excellence you so cordially honor.

Desperate, indeed, is any attempt on earth to meet correspondently this dispensation of heaven: for, while with pious resignation we submit to the will of an all-gracious Providence, we can never cease lamenting, in our finite view of omnipotent wisdom, the heart-rending privation for which our nation weeps. When the civilized world shakes to its centre; when every moment gives birth to strange and momentous changes; when our peaceful quarter of the globe, exempt as it happily has been from any share in the slaughter of the human race, may yet be compelled to abandon her pacific policy, and to risk the doleful casualties of war: what limit is there to the extent of our loss? None within the reach of my words to express; none which your feelings will not disavow.

The founder of our federate republic—our bulwark

in war, our guide in peace, is no more! Oh that this were but questionable! Hope, the comforter of the wretched, would pour into our agonizing hearts its balmy dew. But, alas! there is no hope for us; our WASHINGTON is removed forever! Possessing the stoutest frame, and purest mind, he had passed nearly to his sixty-eighth year, in the enjoyment of high health, when, habituated by his care of us to neglect himself, a slight cold, disregarded, became inconvenient on Friday, oppressive on Saturday, and, defying every medical interposition, before the morning of Sunday, put an end to the best of men. An end did I say?—his fame survives! bounded only by the limits of the earth, and by the extent of the human mind. He survives in our hearts, in the growing knowledge of our children, in the affection of the good throughout the world; and when our monuments shall be done away; when nations now existing shall be no more; when even our young and far-spreading empire shall have perished, still will our WASHINGTON's glory unfaded shine, and die not, until love of virtue cease on earth, or earth itself sinks into chaos.

How, my fellow-citizens, shall I single to your grateful hearts his pre-eminent worth! Where shall I begin in opening to your view a character throughout sublime? Shall I speak of his warlike achievements, all springing from obedience to his country's will—all directed to his country's good?

Will you go with me to the banks of the Monongahela, to see your youthful WASHINGTON, supporting, in the dismal hour of Indian victory, the ill-fated Braddock, and saving, by his judgment and by his valor, the remains of a defeated army, pressed by the conquering savage foe; or, when oppressed America, nobly resolving to risk her all in defence of her violated rights, he was elevated by the unanimous voice of Congress to the command of her armies? Will you follow him to the high grounds of Boston, where to an undisciplined, courageous and virtuous yeomanry, his

presence gave the stability of system, and infused the invincibility of love of country; or shall I carry you to the painful scenes of Long Island, York Island and New Jersey, when, combatting superior and gallant armies, aided by powerful fleets, and led by chiefs high in the roll of fame, he stood, the bulwark of our safety, undismayed by disaster, unchanged by change of fortune? Or will you view him in the precarious fields of Trenton, where deep gloom, unnerving every arm, reigned triumphant through our thinned, worn down, unaided ranks; himself unmoved? Dreadful was the night. It was about this time of winter, the storm raged, the Delaware rolling furiously with floating ice, forbade the approach of man. WASHINGTON, self-collected, viewed the tremendous scene; his country called; unappalled by surrounding dangers, he passed to the hostile shore; he fought; he conquered. The morning sun cheered the American world. Our country rose on the event; and her dauntless chief, pursuing his blow, completed, in the lawns of Princeton, what his vast soul had conceived on the shores of Delaware.

Thence to the strong grounds of Morristown, he led his small but gallant band; and through an eventful winter, by the high efforts of his genius, whose matchless force was measurable only by the growth of difficulties, he held in check formidable hostile legions, conducted by a chief, experienced in the art of war, and famed for his valor on the ever memorable heights of Abraham, where fell Wolfe, Montcalm and since our much lamented Montgomery, all covered with glory. In this fortunate interval, produced by his masterly conduct, our fathers, ourselves, animated by his resistless example, rallied around our country's standard, and continued to follow her beloved chief through the various and trying scenes to which the destinies of our union led.

Who is there that has forgotten the vales of Brandywine, the fields of Germantown, or the plains of

Monmouth? Everywhere present, wants of every kind obstructing, numerous and valiant armies encountering, himself a host, he assuaged our sufferings, limited our privations, and upheld our tottering republic. Shall I display to you the spread of the fire of his soul, by rehearsing the praises of the hero of Saratoga, and his much loved compeer of the Carolinas? No; our WASHINGTON wears not borrowed glory. To Gates—to Greene, he gave without reserve the applause due to their eminent merit; and long may the chiefs of Saratoga, and of Eutaws, receive the grateful respect of a grateful people.

Moving in his own orbit, he imparted heat and light to his most distant satellites; and combining the physical and moral force of all within his sphere, with irresistible, weight he took his course, commiserating folly, disdaining vice, dismaying treason, and invigorating despondency; until the auspicious hour arrived, when, united with the intrepid forces of a potent and magnanimous ally, he brought to submission the since conquerer of India; thus finishing his long career of military glory with a lustre corresponding to his great name, and in this, his last act of war, affixing the seal of fate to our nation's birth.

To the horrid din of battle, sweet peace succeeded; and our virtuous Chief, mindful only of the common good, in a moment tempting personal aggrandizement, hushed the discontents of growing sedition; and surrendering his power into the hands from which he had received it, converted his sword into a ploughshare, teaching an admiring world that to be truly great, you must be truly good.

Was I to stop here, the picture would be incomplete, and the task imposed unfinished. Great as was our WASHINGTON in war, and as much as did that greatness contribute to produce the American Republic, it is not in war alone his pre-eminence stands conspicuous. His various talents, combining all the capacities of a statesman, with those of a soldier, fitted him alike

to guide the councils and the armies of our nation. Scarcely had he rested from his martial toils, while his invaluable parental advice was still sounding in our ears, when he, who had been our shield and our sword, was called forth to act a less splendid, but more important part.

Possessing a clear and penetrating mind, a strong and sound judgment, calmness and temper for deliberation, with invincible firmness and perseverance in resolutions maturely formed; drawing information from all; acting from himself, with incorruptible integrity and unvarying patriotism; his own superiority and the public confidence alike marked him as the man designated by heaven to lead in the great political as well as military events which have distinguished the era of his life.

The finger of an overruling Providence, pointing at WASHINGTON, was neither mistaken nor unobserved; when, to realize the vast hopes to which our revolution had given birth, a change of political system became indispensable.

How novel, how grand the spectacle! Independent states, stretched over an immense territory, and known only by common difficulty, clinging to their union as the rock of their safety, deciding by frank comparison of their relative condition, to rear on that rock, under the guidance of reason, a common government through whose commanding protection, liberty and order, with their long train of blessings, should be safe to themselves, and the sure inheritance of their posterity.

This arduous task devolved on citizens selected by the people, from knowledge of their wisdom and confidence in their virtue. In this august assembly of sages and of patriots, WASHINGTON of course was found; and as if acknowledged to be most wise, where all were wise, with one voice he was declared their chief. How well he merited this rare distinction, how faithful were the labors of himself and his compatriots, the

work of their hands and our union, strength and prosperity, the fruits of that work, best attest.

But to have essentially aided in presenting to his country this consummation of her hopes, neither satisfied the claims of his fellow-citizens on his talents, nor those duties which the possession of those talents imposed. Heaven had not infused into his mind such an uncommon share of its ethereal spirit to remain unemployed; nor bestowed on him his genius unaccompanied with the corresponding duty of devoting it to the common good. To have framed a constitution, was showing only, without realizing, the general happiness. This great work remained to be done; and America, steadfast in her preference, with one voice summoned her beloved WASHINGTON, unpractised as he was in the duties of civil administration, to execute this last act in the completion of the national felicity. Obedient to her call, he assumed the high office with that self-distrust peculiar to his innate modesty, the constant attendant of pre-eminent virtue. What was the burst of joy through our anxious land, on this exhilarating event, is known to us all. The aged, the young, the brave, the fair, rivalled each other in demonstrations of their gratitude; and this high-wrought, delightful scene, was heightened in its effect, by the singular contest between the zeal of the bestowers and the avoidance of the receiver of the honors bestowed. Commencing his administration, what heart is not charmed with the recollection of the pure and wise principles announced by himself, as the basis of his political life! He best understood the indissoluble union between virtue and happiness, between duty and advantage, between the genuine maxims of an honest and magnanimous policy and the solid rewards of public prosperity and individual felicity; watching, with an equal and comprehensive eye, over this great assemblage of communities and interests, he laid the foundations of our national policy in the unerring, immutable principles of morality, based on religion, ex-

emphilying the pre-eminence of a free government, by all the attributes which win the affections of its citizens, or command the respect of the world.

“ O fortunatos nimium, sua si bona norint ! ”

Leading through the complicated difficulties produced by previous obligations and conflicting interests, seconded by succeeding Houses of Congress, enlightened and patriotic, he surmounted all original obstruction, and brightened the path of our national felicity.

The presidential term expiring, his solicitude to exchange exaltation for humility, returned with a force increased with increase of age; and he had prepared his farewell address to his countrymen, proclaiming his intention, when the united interposition of all around him, enforced by the eventful prospects of the epoch, produced a further sacrifice of inclination to duty. The election of President followed, and WASHINGTON, by the unanimous vote of the nation, was called to resume the chief magistracy. What a wonderful fixture of confidence ! Which attracts most our admiration, a people so correct, or a citizen combining an assemblage of talents forbidding rivalry, and stifling even envy itself ? Such a nation ought to be happy, such a chief must be forever revered.

War, long menaced by the Indian tribes, now broke out ; and the terrible conflict, deluging Europe with blood, began to shed its baneful influence over our happy land. To the first, outstretching his invincible arm, under the orders of the gallant Wayne, the American Eagle soared triumphant through distant forests. Peace followed victory ; and the melioration of the condition of the enemy, followed peace. Godlike virtue, which uplifts even the subdued savage !

To the second he opposed himself. New and delicate was the conjuncture, and great was the stake. Soon did his penetrating mind discern and seize the only course, continuing to us all the felicity enjoyed. He issued his proclamation of neutrality. This index

to his whole subsequent conduct, was sanctioned by the approbation of both Houses of Congress, and by the approving voice of the people.

To this sublime policy he inviolably adhered, unmoved by foreign intrusion, unshaken by domestic turbulence.

*"Justum et tenacem propositi virum,
Non civium ardor prava jubentium,
Non vultus instantis tyranni,
Mente quatit solida."*

Maintaining his pacific system at the expense of no duty, America, faithful to herself, and unstained in her honor, continued to enjoy the delights of peace, while afflicted Europe mourns in every quarter, under the accumulated miseries of an unexampled war; miseries in which our happy country must have shared, had not our pre-eminent WASHINGTON been as firm in council as he was brave in the field.

Pursuing steadfastly his course, he held safe the public happiness, preventing foreign war, and quelling internal discord, till the revolving period of a third election approached, when he executed his interrupted but inextinguishable desire of returning to the humble walks of private life.

The promulgation of his fixed resolution, stopped the anxious wishes of an affectionate people from adding a third unanimous testimonial of their unabated confidence in the man so long enthroned in their hearts. When before was affection like this exhibited on earth? Turn over the records of ancient Greece; review the annals of mighty Rome; examine the volumes of modern Europe; you search in vain. America and her WASHINGTON only afford the dignified exemplification.

The illustrious personage, called by the national voice in succession to the arduous office of guiding a free people, had new difficulties to encounter. The amicable effort of settling our difficulties with France,

begun by WASHINGTON, and pursued by his successor in virtue as in station, proving abortive, America took measures of self-defence. No sooner was the public mind roused by a prospect of danger, than every eye was turned to the friend of all, though secluded from public view, and gray in public service. The virtuous veteran, following his plough, received the unexpected summons with mingled emotions of indignation at the unmerited ill-treatment of his country, and of a determination once more to risk his all in her defence.

The annunciation of these feelings, in his affecting letter to the President, accepting the command of the army, concludes his official conduct.

First in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen, he was second to none in the humble and endearing scenes of private life. Pious, just, humane, temperate and sincere; uniform, dignified and commanding, his example was as edifying to all around him as were the effects of that example lasting.

To his equals he was condescending; to his inferiors kind; and to the dear object of his affections exemplarily tender. Correct throughout, vice shuddered in his presence, and virtue always felt his fostering hand; the purity of his private character gave effulgence to his public virtues.

His last scene comported with the whole tenor of his life: although in extreme pain, not a sigh, not a groan escaped him; and with undisturbed serenity he closed his wellspent life. Such was the man America has lost! Such was the man for whom our nation mourns!

Methinks I see his august image, and hear, falling from his venerable lips, these deep sinking words:

“ Cease, sons of America, lamenting our separation: go on, and confirm by your wisdom the fruits of our joint counsels, joint efforts and common dangers. Reverence religion; diffuse knowledge throughout your land; patronize the arts and sciences; let liberty and order be inseparable companions; control party spirit,

the bane of free government; observe good faith to, and cultivate peace with all nations; shut up every avenue to foreign influence; contract rather than extend national connexion; rely on yourselves only: be American in thought and deed. Thus will you give immortality to that union, which was the constant object of my terrestrial labors. Thus will you preserve, undisturbed to the latest posterity, the felicity of a people to me most dear: and thus will you supply, (if my happiness is now aught to you,) the only vacancy in the round of pure bliss high heaven bestows."

EULOGY ON WASHINGTON,

DELIVERED AT THE REQUEST OF THE LEGISLATURE OF
MASSACHUSETTS, FEBRUARY 8, 1800.

BY FISHER AMES.



It is natural that the gratitude of mankind should be drawn to their benefactors. A number of these have successively arisen, who were no less distinguished for the elevation of their virtues, than the lustre of their talents. Of those, however, who were born, and who acted, through life, as if they were born, not for themselves, but for their country and the whole human race, how few, alas! are recorded in the long annals of ages, and how wide the intervals of time and space that divide them. In all this dreary length of way, they appear like five or six lighthouses on as many thousand miles of coast; they gleam upon the surrounding darkness, with an inextinguishable splendor, like stars seen through a mist; but they are seen like stars, to cheer, to guide, and to save. WASHINGTON is now added to that small number. Already he attracts curiosity, like a newly discovered star, whose benignant light will travel on to the world's and time's farthest bounds. Already his name is hung up by history as conspicuously, as if it sparkled in one of the constellations of the sky.

By commemorating his death, we are called this day to yield the homage that is due to virtue; to confess the common debt of mankind as well as our own; and to pronounce for posterity, now dumb, that eulogium, which they will delight to echo ten ages hence, when we are dumb.

I consider myself not merely in the midst of the citizens of this town, or even of the state. In idea, I gather

round me the nation. In the vast and venerable congregation of the patriots of all countries and of all enlightened men, I would, if I could, raise my voice, and speak to mankind in a strain worthy of my audience, and as elevated as my subject. But how shall I express emotions that are condemned to be mute, because they are unutterable? I felt, and I was witness, on the day when the news of his death reached us, to the throes of that grief that saddened every countenance, and wrung drops of agony from the heart. Sorrow labored for utterance, but found none. Every man looked round for the consolation of other men's tears. Gracious Heaven! what consolation! Each face was convulsed with sorrow for the past; every heart shivered with despair for the future. The man who, and who alone, united all hearts, was dead—dead, at the moment when his power to do good was the greatest, and when the aspect of the imminent public dangers seemed more than ever to render his aid indispensable, and his loss irreparable: irreparable; for two WASHINGTONS come not in one age.

A grief so thoughtful, so profound, so mingled with tenderness and admiration, so interwoven with our national self-love, so often revived by being diffused, is not to be expressed. You have assigned me a task that is impossible.

O if I could perform it, if I could illustrate his principles in my discourse as he displayed them in his life, if I could paint his virtues as he practised them, if I could convert the fervid enthusiasm of my heart into the talent to transmit his fame, as it ought to pass, to posterity, I should be the successful organ of your will, the minister of his virtues, and may I dare to say, the humble partaker of his immortal glory. These are ambitious, deceiving hopes, and I reject them; for it is, perhaps, almost as difficult, at once with judgment and feeling, to praise great actions, as to perform them. A lavish and undistinguishing eulogium is not praise; and to discriminate such excellent qualities

as were characteristic and peculiar to him, would be to raise a name, as he raised it, above envy, above parallel, perhaps, for that very reason, above emulation.

Such a portraying of character, however, must be addressed to the understanding, and, therefore, even if it were well executed, would seem to be rather an analysis of moral principles, than the recital of a hero's exploits.

With whatever fidelity I might execute this task, I know that some would prefer a picture drawn to the imagination. They would have our WASHINGTON represented of a giant's size, and in the character of a hero of romance. They, who love to wonder better than to reason, would not be satisfied with the contemplation of a great example, unless, in the exhibition, it should be so distorted into prodigy, as to be both incredible and useless. Others, I hope but few, who think meanly of human nature, will deem it incredible, that even WASHINGTON should think with as much dignity and elevation as he acted; and they will grovel in vain in the search for mean and selfish motives, that could incite and sustain him to devote his life to his country. Do not these suggestions sound in your ears like a profanation of virtue—and, while I pronounce them, do you not feel a thrill of indignation at your hearts? Forbear. Time never fails to bring every exalted reputation to a strict scrutiny; the world, in passing the judgment that is never to be reversed, will deny all partiality even to the name of WASHINGTON. Let it be denied, for its justice will confer glory.

Such a life as WASHINGTON's cannot derive honor from the circumstances of birth and education, though it throws back a lustre upon both. With an inquisitive mind, that always profited by the lights of others, and was unclouded by passions of its own, he acquired a maturity of judgment, rare in age, unparalleled in youth. Perhaps no young man had so early laid up a life's stock of materials for solid reflection, or settled

so soon the principles and habits of his conduct. Gray experience listened to his counsels with respect, and, at a time when youth is almost privileged to be rash, Virginia committed the safety of her frontier, and, ultimately, the safety of America, not merely to his valor, for that would be scarcely praise, but to his prudence.

It is not in Indian wars that heroes are celebrated; but it is there they are formed. No enemy can be more formidable, by the craft of his ambushes, the suddenness of his onset, or the ferocity of his vengeance. The soul of WASHINGTON was thus exercised to danger; and, on the first trial, as on every other, it appeared firm in adversity, cool in action, undaunted, self-possessed. His spirit, and still more his prudence, on the occasion of Braddock's defeat, diffused his name throughout America, and across the Atlantic. Even then his country viewed him with complacency, as her most hopeful son.

At the peace of 1763, Great Britain, in consequence of her victories, stood in a position to prescribe her own terms. She chose, perhaps, better for us than for herself: for by expelling the French from Canada, we no longer feared hostile neighbors; and we soon found just cause to be afraid of our protectors. We discerned, even then, a truth, which the conduct of France has since so strongly confirmed, that there is nothing which the gratitude of weak states can give, that will satisfy strong allies for their aid, but authority: nations that want protectors, will have masters. Our settlements, no longer checked by enemies on the frontier, rapidly increased; and it was discovered, that America was growing to a size that could defend itself.

In this, perhaps unforeseen, but at length obvious state of things, the British government conceived a jealousy of the colonies, of which, and of their intended measures of precaution, they made no secret.

Our nation, like its great leader, had only to take counsel from its courage. When WASHINGTON heard the voice of his country in distress, his obedience was

prompt; and though his sacrifices were great, they cost him no effort. Neither the object, nor the limits of my plan, permit me to dilate on the military events of the revolutionary war. Our history is but a transcript of his claims on our gratitude: our hearts bear testimony, that they are claims not to be satisfied. When overmatched by numbers, a fugitive with a little band of faithful soldiers, the states as much exhausted as dismayed, he explored his own undaunted heart, and found there resources to retrieve our affairs. We have seen him display as much valor as gives fame to heroes, and as consummate prudence as ensures success to valor; fearless of dangers that were personal to him; hesitating and cautious, when they affected his country; preferring fame before safety or repose, and duty before fame.

Rome did not owe more to Fabius, than America to WASHINGTON. Our nation shares with him the singular glory of having conducted a civil war with mildness, and a revolution with order.

The event of that war seemed to crown the felicity and glory both of America and its chief. Until that contest, a great part of the civilized world had been surprisingly ignorant of the force and character, and almost of the existence of the British colonies. They had not retained what they knew, nor felt curiosity to know the state of thirteen wretched settlements, which vast woods enclosed, and still vaster woods divided from each other. They did not view the colonists so much a people, as a race of fugitives, whom want, and solitude and intermixture with the savages, had made barbarians.

At this time, while Great Britain wielded a force truly formidable to the most powerful states, suddenly, astonished Europe beheld a feeble people, till then unknown, stand forth, and defy this giant to the combat. It was so unequal, all expected it would be short. Our final success exalted their admiration to its highest point: they allowed to WASHINGTON all that is due

to transcendent virtue, and to the Americans more than is due to human nature. They considered us a race of WASHINGTONS, and admitted that nature in America was fruitful only in prodigies. Their books and their travellers, exaggerating and distorting all their representations, assisted to establish the opinion that this is a new world, with a new order of men and things adapted to it; that here we practise industry, amidst the abundance that requires none; that we have morals so refined, that we do not need laws; and though we have them, yet we ought to consider their execution as an insult and a wrong; that we have virtue without weaknesses, sentiment without passions, and liberty without factions. These illusions, in spite of their absurdity, and perhaps because they are absurd enough to have dominion over the imagination only, have been received by many of the malecontents against the governments of Europe, and induced them to emigrate. Such illusions are too soothing to vanity to be entirely checked in their currency among Americans.

They have been pernicious, as they cherish false ideas of the rights of men and the duties of rulers. They have led the citizens to look for liberty, where it is not; and to consider the government, which is its castle, as its prison.

WASHINGTON retired to Mount Vernon, and the eyes of the world followed him. He left his countrymen to their simplicity and their passions, and their glory soon departed. Europe began to be undeceived, and it seemed for a time, as if, by the acquisition of independence, our citizens were disappointed. The confederation was then the only compact made "to form a perfect union of the states, to establish justice, to ensure the tranquillity, and provide for the security of the nation;" and accordingly, union was a name that still commanded reverence, though not obedience. The system called justice was, in some of the states, iniquity reduced to elementary principles; and the

public tranquillity was such a portentous calm, as rings in deep caverns before the explosion of an earthquake. Most of the states then were in fact, though not in form, unbalanced democracies. Reason, it is true, spoke audibly in their constitutions; passion and prejudice louder in their laws. It is to the honor of Massachusetts, that it is chargeable with little deviation from principles: its adherence to them was one of the causes of a dangerous rebellion. It was scarcely possible that such governments should not be agitated by parties, and that prevailing parties should not be vindictive and unjust. Accordingly, in some of the states, creditors were treated as outlaws; bankrupts were armed with legal authority to be persecutors; and, by the shock of all confidence and faith, society was shaken to its foundations. Liberty we had, but we dreaded its abuse almost as much as its loss; and the wise, who deplored the one, clearly foresaw the other.

The peace of America hung by a thread, and factions were already sharpening their weapons to cut it. The project of three separate empires in America was beginning to be broached, and the progress of licentiousness would have soon rendered her citizens unfit for liberty in either of them. An age of blood and misery would have punished our disunion: but these were not the considerations to deter ambition from its purpose, while there were so many circumstances in our political situation to favor it.

At this awful crisis, which all the wise so much dreaded at the time, yet which appears, on a retrospect, so much more dreadful than their fears; some man was wanting who possessed a commanding power over the popular passions, but over whom those passions had no power. That man was WASHINGTON.

His name, at the head of such a list of worthies as would reflect honor on any country, had its proper weight with all the enlightened, and with almost all

the well disposed among the less informed citizens, and, blessed be God! the constitution was adopted. Yes, to the eternal honor of America among the nations of the earth, it was adopted, in spite of the obstacles, which, in any other country, and, perhaps, in any other age of this, would have been insurmountable; in spite of the doubts and fears, which well meaning prejudice creates for itself, and which party so artfully inflames into stubbornness; in spite of the vice, which it has subjected to restraint, and which is, therefore, its immortal and implacable foe; in spite of the oligarchies in some of the states, from whom it snatched dominion; it was adopted, and our country enjoys one more invaluable chance for its union and happiness: invaluable! if the retrospect of the dangers we have escaped shall sufficiently inculcate the principles we have so tardily established. Perhaps multitudes are not to be taught by their fears only, without suffering much to deepen the impression; for experience brandishes in her school a whip of scorpions, and teaches nations her summary lessons of wisdom by the scars and wounds of their adversity.

The amendments which have been projected in some of the states show, that, in them at least, these lessons are not well remembered. In a confederacy of states, some powerful, others weak, the weakness of the federal union will, sooner or later, encourage, and will not restrain, the ambition and injustice of the members: the weak can no otherwise be strong or safe, but in the energy of the national government. It is this defect, which the blind jealousy of the weak states not unfrequently contributes to prolong, that has proved fatal to all the confederations that ever existed.

Although it was impossible that such merit as WASHINGTON'S should not produce envy, it was scarcely possible that, with such a transcendent reputation, he should have rivals. Accordingly, he was unanimously chosen President of the United States.

As a general and a patriot, the measure of his

glory was already full; there was no fame left for him to excel but his own; and even that task, the mightiest of all his labors, his civil magistracy has accomplished.

No sooner did the new government begin its auspicious course, than order seemed to arise out of confusion. Commerce and industry awoke, and were cheerful at their labors; for credit and confidence awoke with them. Everywhere was the appearance of prosperity; and the only fear was, that its progress was too rapid to consist with the purity and simplicity of ancient manners. The cares and labors of the President were incessant: his exhortations, example and authority, were employed to excite zeal and activity for the public service: able officers were selected, only for their merits; and some of them remarkably distinguished themselves by their successful management of the public business. Government was administered with such integrity, without mystery, and in so prosperous a course, that it seemed to be wholly employed in acts of beneficence. Though it has made many thousand malecontents, it has never, by its rigor or injustice, made one man wretched.

Such was the state of public affairs; and did it not seem perfectly to ensure uninterrupted harmony to the citizens? Did they not, in respect to their government and its administration, possess their whole heart's desire? They had seen and suffered long the want of an efficient constitution; they had freely ratified it; they saw WASHINGTON, their tried friend, the father of his country, invested with its powers; they knew that he could not exceed or betray them, without forfeiting his own reputation. Consider, for a moment, what a reputation it was: such as no man ever before possessed by so clear a title, and in so high a degree. His fame seemed in its purity to exceed even its brightness; office took honor from his acceptance, but conferred none. Ambition stood awed and darkened by his shadow. For where, through the wide earth, was the man so vain as to dispute precedence with him; or

what were the honors that could make the possessor WASHINGTON's superior? Refined and complex as the ideas of virtue are, even the gross could discern in his life the infinite superiority of her rewards. Mankind perceived some change in their ideas of greatness; the splendor of power, and even of the name of conqueror, had grown dim in their eyes. They did not know that WASHINGTON could augment his fame; but they knew and felt, that the world's wealth, and its empire too, would be a bribe far beneath his acceptance.

This is not exaggeration: never was confidence in a man and a chief magistrate more widely diffused, or more solidly established.

If it had been in the nature of man, that we should enjoy liberty, without the agitations of party, the United States had a right, under these circumstances, to expect it: but it was impossible. Where there is no liberty, they may be exempt from party. It will seem strange, but it scarcely admits a doubt, that there are fewer malecontents in Turkey, than in any free state in the world. Where the people have no power, they enter into no contests, and are not anxious to know how they shall use it. The spirit of discontent becomes torpid for want of employment, and sighs itself to rest. The people sleep soundly in their chains, and do not even dream of their weight. They lose their turbulence with their energy, and become as tractable as any other animals: a state of degradation, in which they extort our scorn, and engage our pity, for the misery they do not feel. Yet that heart is a base one, and fit only for a slave's bosom, that would not bleed freely, rather than submit to such a condition; for liberty, with all its parties and agitations, is more desirable than slavery. Who would not prefer the republics of ancient Greece, where liberty once subsisted in its excess, its delirium, terrible in its charms, and glistening to the last with the blaze of the very fire that consumed it?

I do not know that I ought, but I am sure that I do.

prefer those republics to the dozing slavery of the modern Greece, where the degraded wretches have suffered scorn till they merit it, where they tread on classic ground, on the ashes of heroes and patriots, unconscious of their ancestry, ignorant of the nature, and almost of the name of liberty, and insensible even to the passion for it. Who, on this contrast, can forbear to say, it is the modern Greece that lies buried, that sleeps forgotten in the caves of Turkish darkness? It is the ancient Greece that lives in remembrance, that is still bright with glory, still fresh in immortal youth. They are unworthy of liberty, who entertain a less exalted idea of its excellence. The misfortune is, that those, who profess to be its most passionate admirers, have, generally, the least comprehension of its hazards and impediments: they expect, that an enthusiastic admiration of its nature will reconcile the multitude to the irksomeness of its restraints. Delusive expectation! WASHINGTON was not thus deluded. We have his solemn warning against the often fatal propensities of liberty. He had reflected, that men are often false to their country and their honor, false to duty and even to their interest, but multitudes of men are never long false or deaf to their passions: these will find obstacles in the laws, associates in party. The fellowships thus formed are more intimate, and impose commands more imperious, than those of society.

Thus party forms a state within the state, and is animated by a rivalry, fear and hatred, of its superior.

When this happens, the merits of the government will become fresh provocations and offences, for they are the merits of an enemy. No wonder, then, that as soon as party found the virtue and glory of WASHINGTON were obstacles, the attempt was made, by calumny, to surmount them both. For this, the greatest of all his trials, we know that he was prepared. He knew, that the government must possess sufficient strength from within or without, or fall a victim to

faction. This interior strength was plainly inadequate to its defence, unless it could be reinforced from without by the zeal and patriotism of the citizens; and this latter resource was certainly as accessible to president WASHINGTON, as to any chief magistrate that ever lived. The life of the federal government, he considered, was in the breath of the people's nostrils: whenever they should happen to be so infatuated or inflamed, as to abandon its defence, its end must be as speedy, and might be as tragical as the constitution for France.

While the President was thus administering the government in so wise and just a manner, as to engage the great majority of the enlightened and virtuous citizens to co-operate with him for its support, and while he indulged the hope that time and habit were confirming their attachment, the French revolution had reached that point in its progress, when its terrible principles began to agitate all civilized nations. I will not, on this occasion, detain you to express, though my thoughts teem with it, my deep abhorrence of that revolution; its despotism, by the mob or the military, from the first, and its hypocrisy of morals to the last. Scenes have passed there which exceed description, and which, for other reasons, I will not attempt to describe; for it would not be possible, even at this distance of time, and with the sea between us and France, to go through with the recital of them, without perceiving horror gather, like a frost, about the heart, and almost stop its pulse. That revolution has been constant in nothing but its vicissitudes, and its promises; always delusive, but always renewed, to establish philosophy by crimes, and liberty by the sword. The people of France, if they are not like the modern Greeks, find their cap of liberty is a soldier's helmet; and with all their imitation of dictators and consuls, their exactest similitude to these Roman ornaments, is in their chains. The nations of Europe perceive another resemblance, in their all-conquering ambition.

But it is only the influence of that event on America, and on the measures of the President, that belongs to my subject. It would be ingratelully wrong to his character, to be silent in respect to a part of it, which has the most signally illustrated his virtues.

The genuine character of that revolution is not even yet so well understood, as the dictates of self-preservation require it should be. The chief duty and care of all governments is to protect the rights of property, and the tranquillity of society. The leaders of the French revolution, from the beginning, excited the poor against the rich. This has made the rich poor, but it will never make the poor rich. On the contrary, they were used only as blind instruments to make those leaders masters, first of the adverse party, and then of the state. Thus the powers of the state were turned round into a direction exactly contrary to the proper one, not to preserve tranquillity and restrain violence, but to excite violence by the lure of power, and plunder, and vengeance. Thus all France has been, and still is, as much the prize of the ruling party, as a captured ship; and if any right or possession has escaped confiscation, there is none that has not been liable to it.

Thus it clearly appears, that, in its origin, its character, and its means, the government of that country is revolutionary: that is, not only different from, but directly contrary to, every regular and well-ordered society. It is a danger, similar in its kind, and at least equal in degree, to that, with which ancient Rome menaced her enemies. The allies of Rome were slaves; and it cost some hundred years' efforts of her policy and arms, to make her enemies her allies. Nations, at this day, can trust no better to treaties; they cannot even trust to arms, unless they are used with a spirit and perseverance becoming the magnitude of their danger. For the French revolution has been, from the first, hostile to all right and justice, to all peace and order in society; and therefore, its very existence has been a state of warfare against the civilized world, and most of all

against free and orderly republics, for such are never without factions, ready to be the allies of France, and to aid her in the work of destruction. Accordingly, scarcely any but republics have they subverted. Such governments, by showing in practice what republican liberty is, detect French imposture, and show what their pretexts are not.

To subvert them, therefore, they had, besides the facility that faction affords, the double excitement of removing a reproach, and converting their greatest obstacles into their most efficient auxiliaries.

Who, then, on careful reflection, will be surprised, that the French and their partizans instantly conceived the desire, and made the most powerful attempts, to revolutionize the American government? But it will hereafter seem strange, that their excesses should be excused, as the effects of a struggle for liberty; and that so many of our citizens should be flattered, while they were insulted with the idea, that our example was copied, and our principles pursued. Nothing was ever more false, or more fascinating. Our liberty depends on our education, our laws and habits, to which even prejudices yield; on the dispersion of our people on farms, and on the almost equal diffusion of property; it is founded on morals and religion, whose authority reigns in the heart; and on the influence all these produce on public opinion, before that opinion governs rulers. Here liberty is restraint; there it is violence: here it is mild and cheering, like the morning sun of our summer, brightening the hills and making the vallies green; there it is like the sun, when its rays dart pestilence on the sands of Africa. American liberty calms and restrains the licentious passions, like an angel that says to the winds and troubled seas, be still. But how has French licentiousness appeared to the wretched citizens of Switzerland and Venice? Do not their haunted imaginations, even when they wake, represent her as a monster, with eyes that flash wildfire, hands that hurl thunderbolts, a voice that shakes the foundation of the hills? She stands, and

her ambition measures the earth ; she speaks, and an epidemic fury seizes the nations.

Experience is lost upon us, if we deny, that it had seized a large part of the American nation. It is as sober and intelligent, as free, and as worthy to be free, as any in the world ; yet, like all other people, we have passions and prejudices, and they had received a violent impulse, which, for a time, misled us.

Jacobinism had become here, as in France, rather a sect than a party, inspiring a fanaticism that was equally intolerant and contagious. The delusion was general enough to be thought the voice of the people, therefore, claiming authority without proof, and jealous enough to exact acquiescence without a murmur of contradiction. Some progress was made in training multitudes to be vindictive and ferocious. To them nothing seemed amiable, but the revolutionary justice of Paris ; nothing terrible, but the government and justice of America. The very name of patriots was claimed and applied, in proportion as the citizens had alienated their hearts from America, and transferred their affections to their foreign corrupter. Party discerned its intimate connexion of interest with France, and consummated its profligacy by yielding to foreign influence.

The views of these allies required, that this country should engage in war with Great Britain. Nothing less would give to France all the means of annoying this dreaded rival : nothing less would ensure the subjection of America, as a satellite to the ambition of France : nothing else could make a revolution here perfectly inevitable.

For this end, the minds of the citizens were artfully inflamed, and the moment was watched, and impatiently waited for, when their long heated passions should be in fusion, to pour them forth, like the lava of a volcano, to blacken and consume the peace and government of our country.

The systematic operations of a faction, under for-

eign influence, had begun to appear, and were successively pursued, in a manner too deeply alarming to be soon forgotten. Who of us does not remember this worst of evils in this worst of ways? Shame would forget, if it could, that, in one of the states, amendments were proposed to break down the federal senate, which, as in the state governments, is a great bulwark of the public order. To break down another, an extravagant judiciary power was claimed for states. In another state, a rebellion was fomented by the agent of France: and who, without fresh indignation, can remember, that the powers of government were openly usurped, troops levied, and ships fitted out to fight for her? Nor can any true friend to our government consider without dread, that, soon afterwards, the treaty-making power was boldly challenged for a branch of the government, from which the constitution has wisely withholden it.

I am oppressed, and know not how to proceed with my subject. WASHINGTON, blessed be God! who endued him with wisdom and clothed him with power; WASHINGTON issued his proclamation of neutrality, and, at an early period, arrested the intrigues of France and the passions of his countrymen, on the very edge of the precipice of war and revolution.

This act of firmness, at the hazard of his reputation and peace, entitles him to the name of the first of patriots. Time was gained for the citizens to recover their virtue and good sense, and they soon recovered them. The crisis was passed, and America was saved.

You and I, most respected fellow-citizens, should be sooner tired than satisfied in recounting the particulars of this illustrious man's life.

How great he appeared, while he administered the government, how much greater when he retired from it, how he accepted the chief military command under his wise and upright successor, how his life was unspotted like his fame, and how his death was worthy

of his life, are so many distinct subjects of instruction, and each of them singly more than enough for an eulogium. I leave the task, however, to history and to posterity; they will be faithful to it.

It is not impossible, that some will affect to consider the honors paid to this great patriot by the nation, as excessive, idolatrous, and degrading to freemen, who are all equal. I answer, that, refusing to virtue its legitimate honors, would not prevent their being lavished, in future, on any worthless and ambitious favorite. If this day's example should have its natural effect, it will be salutary. Let such honors be so conferred only when, in future, they shall be so merited: then the public sentiment will not be misled, nor the principles of a just equality corrupted. The best evidence of reputation is a man's whole life. We have now, alas! all WASHINGTON's before us. There has scarcely appeared a really great man, whose character has been more admired in his lifetime, or less correctly understood by his admirers. When it is comprehended, it is no easy task to delineate its excellences in such a manner, as to give to the portrait both interest and resemblance; for, it requires thought and study to understand the true ground of the superiority of his character over many others, whom he resembled in the principles of action, and even in the manner of acting. But, perhaps, he excels all the great men that ever lived, in the steadiness of his adherence to his maxims of life, and in the uniformity of all his conduct to the same maxims. These maxims, though wise, were yet not so remarkable for their wisdom, as for their authority over his life: for, if there were any errors in his judgment, (and he discovered as few as any man,) we know of no blemishes in his virtue. He was the patriot without reproach: he loved his country well enough to hold his success in serving it an ample recompense. Thus far self-love and love of country coincided: but when his country needed sacrifices, that no other man could, or, perhaps, would be willing to make, he did not even hesi-

tate. This was virtue in its most exalted character. More than once he put his fame at hazard, when he had reason to think it would be sacrificed, at least in this age. Two instances cannot be denied: when the army was disbanded; and again, when he stood, like Leonidas at the pass of Thermopylæ, to defend our independence against France.

It is, indeed, almost as difficult to draw his character, as the portrait of virtue. The reasons are similar: our ideas of moral excellence are obscure, because they are complex, and we are obliged to resort to illustrations. WASHINGTON's example is the happiest, to show what virtue is; and, to delineate his character, we naturally expatiate on the beauty of virtue: much must be felt, and much imagined. His pre-eminence is not so much to be seen in the display of any one virtue, as in the possession of them all, and in the practice of the most difficult. Hereafter, therefore, his character must be studied before it will be striking; and then it will be admitted as a model, a precious one to a free republic!

It is no less difficult to speak of his talents. They were adapted to lead, without dazzling mankind; and to draw forth and employ the talents of others, without being misled by them. In this he was certainly superior, that he neither mistook nor misapplied his own. His great modesty and reserve would have concealed them, if great occasions had not called them forth; and then, as he never spoke from the affectation to shine, nor acted from any sinister motives, it is from their effects only that we are to judge of their greatness and extent. In public trusts, where men, acting conspicuously, are cautious, and in those private concerns, where few conceal or resist their weaknesses, WASHINGTON was uniformly great, pursuing right conduct from right maxims. His talents were such as assist a sound judgment, and ripen with it. His prudence was consummate, and seemed to take the direction of his powers and passions; for, as a soldier, he was more solicitous to avoid mistakes that

might be fatal, than to perform exploits that are brilliant; and as a statesman, to adhere to just principles, however old, than to pursue novelties; and therefore, in both characters, his qualities were singularly adapted to the interest, and were tried in the greatest perils of the country. His habits of inquiry were so far remarkable, that he was never satisfied with investigating, nor desisted from it, so long as he had less than all the light that he could obtain upon a subject, and then he made his decision without bias.

This command over the partialities that so generally stop men short, or turn them aside in their pursuit of truth, is one of the chief causes of his unvaried course of right conduct in so many difficult scenes, where every human actor must be presumed to err. If he had strong passions, he had learned to subdue them, and to be moderate and mild. If he had weaknesses, he concealed them, which is rare, and excluded them from the government of his temper and conduct, which is still more rare. If he loved fame, he never made improper compliances for what is called popularity. The fame he enjoyed is of the kind that will last forever; yet it was rather the effect, than the motive of his conduct. Some future Plutarch will search for a parallel to his character. Epaminondas is, perhaps, the brightest name of all antiquity. Our WASHINGTON resembled him in the purity and ardor of his patriotism; and, like him, he first exalted the glory of his country. There, it is to be hoped, the parallel ends: for Thebes fell with Epaminondas. But such comparisons cannot be pursued far, without departing from the similitude. For we shall find it as difficult to compare great men as great rivers: some we admire for the length and rapidity of their current, and the grandeur of their cataracts; others, for the majestic silence and fulness of their streams: we cannot bring them together to measure the difference of their waters. The unambitious life of WASHINGTON, declining fame, yet courted by it, seemed, like the Ohio, to

choose its long way through solitudes, diffusing fertility; or like his own Potomac, widening and deepening his channel, as he approaches the sea, and displaying most the usefulness and serenity of his greatness towards the end of his course. Such a citizen would do honor to any country. The constant veneration and affection of his country will show, that it was worthy of such a citizen.

However his military fame may excite the wonder of mankind, it is chiefly by his civil magistracy, that his example will instruct them. Great generals have arisen in all ages of the world, and perhaps most in those of despotism and darkness. In times of violence and convulsion, they rise, by the force of the whirlwind, high enough to ride in it, and direct the storm. Like meteors, they glare on the black clouds with a splendor, that, while it dazzles and terrifies, makes nothing visible but the darkness. The fame of heroes is indeed growing vulgar: they multiply in every long war; they stand in history, and thicken in their ranks, almost as undistinguished as their own soldiers.

But such a chief magistrate as WASHINGTON, appears like the pole star in a clear sky, to direct the skilful statesman. His presidency will form an epoch, and be distinguished as the age of WASHINGTON. Already it assumes its high place in the political region. Like the milky-way, it whitens along its allotted portion of the hemisphere. The latest generations of men will survey, through the telescope of history, the space where so many virtues blend their rays, and delight to separate them into groups and distinct virtues. As the best illustration of them, the living monument, to which the first of patriots would have chosen to consign his fame, it is my earnest prayer to heaven, that our country may subsist, even to that late day, in the plenitude of its liberty and happiness, and mingle its mild glory with WASHINGTON'S.

EULOGY ON WASHINGTON,

DELIVERED FEBRUARY 22, 1800, BY APPOINTMENT OF A
NUMBER OF THE CLERGY OF NEW YORK.

BY JOHN M. MASON,

PASTOR OF THE ASSOCIATE-REFORMED CHURCH IN THE CITY OF
NEW YORK.



FELLOW-CITIZENS.

THE offices of this day belong less to eloquence than to grief. We celebrate one of those great events which, by uniting public calamity with private affliction, create in every bosom a response to the throes of an empire. God, who doeth wonders; whose ways must be adored, but not questioned, in severing from the embraces of America her first-beloved patriot, has imposed on her the duty of blending impassioned feeling with profound and un murmuring submission. An assembled nation, lamenting a father in their departed chief; absorbing every inferior consideration in the sentiment of their common loss; mingling their recollections and their anticipations, their wishes, their regrets, their sympathies and their tears, is a spectacle not more tender than awful, and excites emotions too mighty for utterance. I should have no right to complain, Americans, if, instead of indulging me with your attention, you should command me to retire, and leave you to weep in the silence of woe. I should deserve the reprimand, were I to appear before you with the pretensions of eulogy. No! Eulogy has mistaken her province and her powers, when she assumes for her theme the glory of WASHINGTON. His deeds and his virtues are his high eulogium—his deeds most fami-

liar to your memories, his virtues most dear to your affections. To me, therefore, nothing is permitted but to borrow from yourselves. And though a pencil, more daring than mine, would languish in attempting to retrace the living lines which the finger of truth has drawn upon your hearts, you will bear with me, while, on a subject which dignifies every thing related to it, 'I tell you that which you yourselves do know.'

The name of WASHINGTON, connected with all that is most brilliant in the history of our country, and in human character, awakens sensations which agitate the fervors of youth, and warm the chill bosom of age. Transported to the times when America rose to repel her wrongs, and to claim her destinies, a scene of boundless grandeur bursts upon our view. Long had her filial duty expostulated with parental injustice. Long did she deprecate the rupture of those ties which she had been proud of preserving and displaying. But her humble entreaty spurned, aggression followed by the rod, and the rod by scorpions, having changed remonstrance into murmur, and murmur into resistance, she transfers her grievances from the throne of earth to the throne of heaven; and precedes by an appeal to the God of judgment, her appeal to the sword of war.

At issue now with the mistress of the seas; unfurnished with equal means of defence; the convulsive shock approaching; and every evil omen passing before her, one step of rashness or of folly may seal her doom. In this accumulation of trouble, who shall command her confidence, and face her dangers, and conduct her cause? God, whose kingdom ruleth over all, prepares from afar the instruments best adapted to his purpose. By an influence which it would be as irrational to dispute as it is vain to scrutinize, he stirs up the spirit of the statesman and the soldier. Minds, on which he has bestowed the elements of greatness, are brought, by his providence, into contact with exigencies which rouse them into action. It is in the season

of effort and of peril that impotence disappears, and energy arises. The whirlwind, which sweeps away the glow-worm, uncovers the fire of genius, and kindles it into a blaze, that irradiates, at once, both the zenith and the poles.

But among the heroes who sprung from obscurity, when the college, the counting-house, and the plough teemed with "thunderbolts of war," none could, in all respects, meet the wants and the wishes of America. She required, in her leader, a man reared under her own eye; who combined with distinguished talent, a character above suspicion; who had added to his physical and moral qualities the experience of difficult service; a man, who should concentrate in himself the public affections and confidences; who should know how to multiply the energies of every other man under his direction, and to make disaster itself the means of success—his arm a fortress and his name a host. Such a man it were almost presumption to expect; but such a man all-ruling heaven had provided, and that man was WASHINGTON.

Pre-eminent already in worth, he is summoned to the pre-eminence of toil and of danger. Unallured by the charms of opulence: unappalled by the hazard of a dubious warfare: unmoved by the prospect of being, in the event of failure, the first and most conspicuous victim, he obeys the summons, because he loves his duty. The resolve is firm, for the probation is terrible. His theatre is a world; his charge, a family of nations; the interest staked, in his hands, the prosperity of millions unborn in ages to come; his means, under aid from on high, the resources of his own breast, with the raw recruits and irregular supplies of distracted colonies. O crisis worthy of such a hero! Followed by her little bands, her prayers and her tears, WASHINGTON espouses the quarrel of his country. As he moves on to the conflict, every heart palpitates, and every knee trembles. The foe, alike valiant and veteran, presents no easy conquest, nor aught inviting but

to those who had consecrated their blood to the public weal. The Omnipotent, who allots great enjoyment as the meed of great exertion, had ordained that America should be free; but that she should learn to value the blessing by the price of its acquisition. She shall go to a "wealthy place," but her way is "through fire and through water." Many a generous chief must bleed, and many a gallant youth sink, at his side, into the surprised grave; the field must be heaped with slain; the purple torrent must roll, ere the angel of peace descend with his olive. It is here, amid devastation, and horror, and death, that WASHINGTON must reap his laurels, and engrave his trophies on the shields of immortality. Shall Delaware and Princeton—shall Monmouth and York—But I may not particularize; far less repeat the tale which babes recite, which poets sing, and fame has published to the listening world. Every scene of his action was a scene of his triumph. Now, he saved the republic by more than Fabian caution; now, he avenged her by more than Carthaginian fierceness. While, at every stroke, her forests and her hills echoed to her shout, "The sword of the LORD and of WASHINGTON!" Nor was this the vain applause of partiality and enthusiasm. The blasted schemes of Britain; her broken and her captive hosts, proclaimed the terror of his arms. Skilled were her chiefs, and brave her legions; but bravery and skill rendered them a conquest more worthy of WASHINGTON. True, he suffered, in his turn, repulse and even defeat. It was both natural and needful. Unchequered with reverse, his story would have resembled rather the fictions of romance, than the truth of narrative; and had he been neither defeated nor repulsed, we had never seen all the grandeur of his soul. He arrayed himself in fresh honors by that which ruins even the great—vicissitude. He could not only subdue an enemy, but what is infinitely more, he could subdue misfortune. With an equanimity which gave temperance to victory, and cheerfulness to disaster, he balanced the fortunes of

the state. In the face of hostile prowess; in the midst of mutiny and treason; surrounded with astonishment, irresolution and despondence, WASHINGTON remained erect, unmoved, invincible. Whatever ills America might endure in maintaining her rights, she exulted that she had nothing to fear from her commander-in-chief. The event justified her most sanguine presages. That invisible hand which girded him at first, continued to guard and to guide him through the successive stages of the revolution. Nor did he account it a weakness to bend the knee in homage to its supremacy, and prayer for its direction. This was the armor of WASHINGTON; this the salvation of his country.

The hope of her reduction at length abandoned; her war of liberty brought, in the establishment of independence, to that honorable conclusion for which it had been undertaken, the hour arrived when he was to resign the trust which he had accepted with diffidence. To a mind less pure and elevated, the situation of America would have furnished the pretext, as well as the means, of military usurpation. Talents equal to daring enterprise; the derangement of public affairs; unbounded popularity; and the devotion of a suffering army, would have been to every other a strong, and to almost any other, an irresistible temptation. In WASHINGTON they did not produce even the pain of self-denial. They added the last proof of his disinterestedness; and imposed on his country the last obligation to gratitude. Impenetrable by corrupting influence; deaf to honest but erring solicitation; irreconcilable with every disloyal sentiment, he urged the necessity, and set the example of laying down, in peace, arms assumed for the common defence.* But to separate from the companions of his danger and his glory, was, even for WASHINGTON, a difficult task. About to leave them forever, a thousand

* Morris' Oration.

sensations rushed upon his heart, and all the soldier melted in the man. He, who has no tenderness, has no magnanimity. WASHINGTON could vanquish, and WASHINGTON could weep. Never was affection more cordially reciprocated. The grasped hand; the silent anguish; the spontaneous tear trickling down the scarred cheek; the wistful look, as he passed, after the warrior who should never again point their way to victory; form a scene for nature's painter, and for nature's bard.

But we must not lose, in our sensibility, the remembrance of his penetration, his prudence, his regard of public honor, and of public faith. Abhorring outrage; jealous for the reputation, and dreading the excesses, of even a gallant army, flushed with conquest, prompted by incendiaries, and sheltered by a semblance of right, his last act of authority is to dismiss them to their homes without entering the capital. Accompanied with a handful of troops, he repairs to the council of the states, and, through them, surrenders to his country the sword which he had drawn in her defence. Singular phenomenon! WASHINGTON becomes a private citizen. He exchanges supreme command for the tranquillity of domestic life. Go, incomparable man! to adorn no less the civic virtues, than the splendid achievements of the field: go, rich in the consciousness of thy high deserts: go, with the admiration of the world, with the plaudit of millions, and the orisons of millions more for thy temporal and thine eternal bliss!

The glory of WASHINGTON seemed now complete. While the universal voice proclaimed that he might decline, with honor, every future burden, it was a wish and an opinion almost as universal, that he would not jeopardize the fame which he had so nobly won. Had personal considerations swayed his mind, this would have been his own decision. But, untutored in the philosophism of the age, he had not learned to separate the maxims of wisdom from the injunctions of

duty. His soul was not debased by that moral cowardice which fears to risk popularity for the general good. Having assisted in the formation of an efficient government which he had refused to dictate or enforce at the mouth of his cannon, he was ready to contribute the weight of his character to insure its effect. And his country rejoiced in an opportunity of testifying, that, much as she loved and trusted others, she still loved and trusted him most. Hailed, by her unanimous suffrage, the pilot of the state, he approaches the awful helm, and grasping it with equal firmness and ease, demonstrates that forms of power cause no embarrassment to him.

In so novel an experiment, as a nation framing a government for herself under no impulse but that of reason; adopting it through no force but the force of conviction; and putting it into operation without bloodshed or violence, it was all-important that her first magistrate should possess her unbounded goodwill. Those elements of discord which lurked in the diversity of local interest; in the collision of political theories; in the irritations of party; in the disappointed or gratified ambition of individuals; and which, notwithstanding her graceful transition, threatened the harmony of America, it was for WASHINGTON alone to control and repress. His tried integrity, his ardent patriotism, were instead of a volume of arguments for the excellence of that system which he approved and supported. Among the simple and honest, whom no artifice was omitted to ensnare, there were thousands who knew little of the philosophy of government, and less of the nice machinery of the constitution; but they knew that WASHINGTON was wise and good; they knew it was impossible that he should betray them; and by this they were rescued from the fangs of faction. Ages will not furnish so instructive a comment on that cardinal virtue of republicans, confidence in the men of their choice; nor a more salutary antidote against the pestilential principle, that the soul of a re-

public is jealousy. At the commencement of her federal government, mistrust would have ruined America; in confidence, she found her safety.

The re-appearance of WASHINGTON as a statesman, excited the conjecture of the old world, and the anxiety of the new. His martial fame had fixed a criterion, however inaccurate, of his civil administration. Military genius does neither confer nor imply political ability. Whatever merit may be attached to the faculty of arranging the principles, and prosecuting the details, of an army, it must be conceded that vaster comprehensions belong to the statesman. Ignorance, vanity, the love of paradox, and the love of mischief, affecting to sneer at the "mystery of government," have, indeed, taught, that common sense and common honesty are his only requisites. The nature of things and the experience of every people, in every age, teach a different doctrine. America had multitudes who possessed both those qualities, but she had only one WASHINGTON. To adjust, in the best compromise, a thousand interfering views, so as to effect the greatest good of the whole with the least inconvenience to the parts; to curb the dragon of faction by means which insure the safety of public liberty; to marshal opinion and prejudice among the auxiliaries of the law; in fine, to touch the mainspring of national agency, so as to preserve the equipoise of its powers, and to make the feeblest movements of the extremities accord with the impulse at the centre, is only for genius of the highest order. To excel equally in military and political science, has been the praise of a few chosen spirits, among whom, with a proud preference, we enrol the father of our country.

It was the fortune of WASHINGTON to direct transactions of which the repetition is hardly within the limits of human possibilities. When he entered on his first presidency, all the interests of the continent were vibrating through the arch of political uncertainty. The departments of the new government were to be mark-

ed out, and filled up; foreign relations to be regulated; the physical and moral strength of the nation to be organized; and that, at a time when scepticism in politics, no less than in religion and morals, was preparing, throughout Europe, to spring the mine of revolution and ruin. In discharging his first duties, that same intelligent, cautious, resolute procedure, which had rendered him the bulwark of war, now exhibited him as the guardian of peace. Appropriation of talent to employment, is one of the deep results of political sagacity. And in his selection of men for office, WASHINGTON displayed a knowledge of character and of business, a contempt of favoritism, and a devotion to the public welfare, which permitted the General to be rivalled only by the President.

Under such auspices, the fruit and the pledge of divine blessing, America rears her head, and recovers her vigor. Agriculture laughs on the land: commerce ploughs the wave: peace rejoices her at home; and she grows into respect abroad. Ah! too happy, to progress without interruption. The explosions of Europe bring new vexations to her, and new trials and new glories to her WASHINGTON. Vigilant and faithful, he hears the tempest roar from afar, warns her of its approach, and prepares for averting its dangers. Black are the heavens, and angry the billows, and narrow and perilous the passage. But his composure, dignity and firmness, are equal to the peril. Unseduced by fraud, unterrified by threat, unawed by clamor, he holds on his steady way, and again he saves his country. With less decision on the part of WASHINGTON, a generous, but mistaken ardor, would have plunged her into the whirlpool, and left her till this hour the sport of the contending elements. Americans! bow to that magnanimous policy, which protected your dearest interests at the hazard of incurring your displeasure. It was thus that WASHINGTON proved himself, not in the cant of the day, but in the procurement of substantial good, in stepping between them and perdition, the servant of the people.

The historian of this period will have to record a revolt, raised by infatuation, against the law of the land.* He will have to record the necessity which compelled even WASHINGTON to suppress it by the sword. But he will have to record also his gentleness and his lenity. Deeds of severity were his sad tribute to justice: deeds of humanity the native suggestions of his heart.

Eight years of glorious administration created a claim on the indulgence of his country, which none could think of disputing, but which all lamented should be urged. The ends, which rendered his services indispensable, being mostly attained, he demands his restoration to private life. Resigning, to an able successor, the reins which he had guided with characteristic felicity, he once more bids adieu to public honors. Let not his motives be mistaken or forgotten. It was for him to set as great examples in the relinquishment, as in the acceptance of power. No mortified ambition, no haughty disgusts, no expectation of higher office, prompted his retreat. He knew, that foreign nations considered his life as the bond, and his influence as the vital spirit of our union. He knew, that his own lustre threw a shade over others, not more injurious to them than to his country. He wished to dispel the enchantment of his own name: he wished to relieve the apprehensions of America, by making her sensible of her riches in other patriots; to be a spectator of her prosperity under their management; and to convince herself, and to convince the world, that she depended less on him, than either her enemies or her friends believed. And, therefore, he withdrew.

Having lavished all her honors, his country had nothing more to bestow upon him except her blessing. But he had more to bestow upon his country. His views and his advice, the condensed wisdom of all his reflection, observation and experience, he delivers to his compatriots in a manual worthy of them to study,

* The Insurrection in Pennsylvania in 1794.

and of him to compose. And now, when they could hope to enjoy only the satisfaction of still possessing him, the pleasure of recounting his acts, and the benefit of practising his lessons, they accompany his retirement with their aspirations, that his evening may be as serene, as his morning had been fair, and his noon resplendent.

That he should ever again endure the solitudes of office, was rather to be deprecated than desired. Because it must be a crisis singularly portentous, which could justify another invasion of his repose. From such a necessity we fondly promised ourselves exemption. Flattering, fallacious security! The sudden whirlwind springs out of a calm. The revolutions of a day proclaim that an empire was. However remote the position of America; however peaceful her character; however cautious and equitable her policy; she was not to go unmolested by the gigantic fiend of Gallic domination. That she was free and happy, was crime and provocation enough. He fastened on her his murderous eye: he was preparing for her that deadly embrace, in which nations, supine and credulous, had already perished. Reduced to the alternative of swelling the catalogue of his victims, or arguing her cause with the bayonet and the ball, she bursts the ill-fated bonds which had linked her to his destinies, and assumes the tone and attitude of defiance. The gauntlet is thrown. To advance is perilous: to retreat, destruction. She looks wistfully round, and calls for WASHINGTON. The well known voice, that voice, which he had ever accounted a law, pierces the retreats of Vernon, and thrills his bosom. Domestic enjoyments lose their charm; repose becomes to him inglorious; every sacrifice is cheap, and every exertion easy, when his beloved country requires his aid. With all the alacrity of youth, he flies to her succor. The helmet of war presses his silver locks. His sword, which dishonor had never tarnished, nor corruption poisoned, he once more unsheaths, and prepares to re-

ceive on its point the insolence of that foe whose intrigue he had foiled by his wisdom.

It must ever be difficult to compare the merits of WASHINGTON's characters, because he always appeared greatest in that which he last sustained. Yet if there is a preference, it must be assigned to the lieutenant-general of the armies of America. Not because the duties of that station were more arduous than those which he had often performed, but because it more fully displayed his magnanimity. While others become great by elevation, WASHINGTON becomes greater by condescension. Matchless patriot! to stoop, on public motives, to an inferior appointment, after possessing and dignifying the highest offices! Thrice favored country, which boasts of such a citizen! We gaze with astonishment: we exult that we are Americans. We augur every thing great, and good, and happy. But whence this sudden horror? What means that cry of agony? Oh! 'tis the shriek of America! The fairy vision is fled: WASHINGTON is—no more!—

“How are the mighty fallen, and the weapons of war perished!”

Daughters of America, who erst prepared the festal bower and the laurel wreath, plant now the cypress grove, and water it with tears.

“How are the mighty fallen, and the weapons of war perished!”

The death of WASHINGTON, Americans, has revealed the extent of our loss. It has given us the final proof that we never mistook him. Take his affecting testament, and read the secrets of his soul. Read all the power of domestic virtue. Read his strong love of letters and of liberty. Read his fidelity to republican principle, and his jealousy of national character. Read his devotedness to you in his military bequests to near relations. “These swords,” they are the words of WASHINGTON, “these swords are accompanied with an

injunction not to unsheath them for the purpose of shedding of blood, except it be for self-defence, or in defence of their country and its rights; and in the latter case, to keep them unsheathed, and prefer falling with them in their hands to the relinquishment thereof."

In his acts, Americans, you have seen the man. In the complicated excellence of character, he stands alone. Let no future Plutarch attempt the iniquity of parallel. Let no soldier of fortune, let no usurping conqueror, let not Alexander or Cæsar, let not Cromwell or Buonaparte, let none among the dead or the living, appear in the same picture with WASHINGTON: or let them appear as the shade to his light.

On this subject, my countrymen, it is for others to speculate, but it is for us to feel. Yet, in proportion to the severity of the stroke, ought to be our thankfulness, that it was not inflicted sooner. Through a long series of years has God preserved our WASHINGTON a public blessing: and now that he has removed him forever, shall we presume to say, What doest thou? Never did the tomb preach more powerfully the dependence of all things on the will of the Most High. The greatest of mortals crumble into dust, the moment He commands, Return, ye children of men WASHINGTON was but the instrument of a benignant God. He sickens, he dies, that we may learn not to trust in men, nor to make flesh our arm. But though WASHINGTON is dead, Jehovah lives. God of our fathers! be our God, and the God of our children! Thou art our refuge and our hope; the pillar of our strength; the wall of our defence, and our unfading glory!

Americans! this God, who raised up WASHINGTON, and gave you liberty, exacts from you the duty of cherishing it with a zeal according to knowledge. Never sully, by apathy or by outrage, your fair inheritance. Risk not, for one moment, on visionary theories. the solid blessings of your lot. To you, particu-

larly, O youth of America! applies the solemn charge. In all the perils of your country, remember WASHINGTON. The freedom of reason and of right, has been handed down to you on the point of the hero's sword. Guard, with veneration, the sacred deposit. The curse of ages will rest upon you, O youth of America! if ever you surrender to foreign ambition, or domestic lawlessness, the precious liberties for which WASHINGTON fought, and your fathers bled.

I cannot part with you, fellow-citizens, without urging the long remembrance of our present assembly. This day we wipe away the reproach of republics, that they know not how to be grateful. In your treatment of living patriots, recall your love and your regret of WASHINGTON. Let not future inconsistency charge this day with hypocrisy. Happy America, if she gives an instance of universal principle in her sorrows for the man "first in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen!"

AN ORATION,

DELIVERED AT PLYMOUTH DECEMBER 22, 1802.

AT THE ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATION OF THE FIRST
LANDING OF OUR ANCESTORS, AT THAT PLACE :

BY JOHN QUINCY ADAMS.



Among the sentiments of most powerful operation upon the human heart, and most highly honorable to the human character, are those of veneration for our forefathers, and of love for our posterity. They form the connecting links between the selfish and the social passions. By the fundamental principle of christianity, the happiness of the individual is interwoven, by innumerable and imperceptible ties, with that of his contemporaries: by the power of filial reverence and parental affection, individual existence is extended beyond the limits of individual life, and the happiness of every age is chained in mutual dependence upon that of every other. Respect for his ancestors excites, in the breast of man, interest in their history, attachment to their characters, concern for their errors, involuntary pride in their virtues. Love for his posterity spurs him to exertion for their support, stimulates him to virtue for their example, and fills him with the tenderest solicitude for their welfare. Man, therefore, was not made for himself alone. No; he was made for his country, by the obligations of the social compact: he was made for his species, by the christian duties of universal charity: he was made for all ages past, by the sentiment of reverence for his forefathers; and he was made for all future times, by the impulse of affection for his progeny. Under the influence of these principles, "Existence sees him spurn her bound-

ed reign." They redeem his nature from the subjection of time and space: he is no longer a "puny insect shivering at a breeze;" he is the glory of creation, formed to occupy all time and all extent: bounded, during his residence upon earth, only by the boundaries of the world, and destined to life and immortality in brighter regions, when the fabric of nature itself shall dissolve and perish.

The voice of history has not, in all its compass, a note but answers in unison with these sentiments. The barbarian chieftain, who defended his country against the Roman invasion, driven to the remotest extremity of Britain, and stimulating his followers to battle, by all that has power of persuasion upon the human heart, concludes his exhortation by an appeal to these irresistible feelings*—"Think of your forefathers and of your posterity." The Romans themselves, at the pinnacle of civilization, were actuated by the same impressions, and celebrated, in anniversary festivals, every great event which had signalized the annals of their forefathers. To multiply instances, where it were impossible to adduce an exception, would be to waste your time and abuse your patience: but in the sacred volume, which contains the substance of our firmest faith and of our most precious hopes, these passions not only maintain their highest efficacy, but are sanctioned by the express injunctions of the Divine Legislator to his chosen people.

The revolutions of time furnish no previous example of a nation shooting up to maturity and expanding into greatness, with the rapidity which has characterized the growth of the American people. In the luxuriance of youth, and in the vigor of manhood, it is pleasing and instructive to look backwards upon the helpless days of infancy: but, in the continual and essential changes of a growing subject, the transactions of that early

* *Proinde ituri in aciem, et majores vestros et posteros cogitate.*
GALLOACUS in Vita Agricolar.

period would be soon obliterated from the memory, but for some periodical call of attention to aid the silent records of the historian. Such celebrations arouse and gratify the kindest emotions of the bosom. They are faithful pledges of the respect we bear to the memory of our ancestors, and of the tenderness with which we cherish the rising generation. They introduce the sages and heroes of ages past to the notice and emulation of succeeding times: they are at once testimonials of our gratitude, and schools of virtue to our children.

These sentiments are wise; they are honorable; they are virtuous; their cultivation is not merely innocent pleasure, it is incumbent duty. Obedient to their dictates, you, my fellow-citizens, have instituted and paid frequent observance to this annual solemnity. And what event of weightier intrinsic importance, or of more extensive consequences, was ever selected for this honorary distinction?

In reverting to the period of their origin, other nations have generally been compelled to plunge into the chaos of impenetrable antiquity, or to trace a lawless ancestry into the caverns of ravishers and robbers. It is your peculiar privilege to commemorate, in this birthday of your nation, an event ascertained in its minutest details: an event of which the principal actors are known to you familiarly, as if belonging to your own age: an event of a magnitude before which imagination shrinks at the imperfection of her powers. It is your further happiness to behold, in those eminent characters who were most conspicuous in accomplishing the settlement of your country, men upon whose virtues you can dwell with honest exultation. The founders of your race are not handed down to you, like the father of the Roman people, as the sucklings of a wolf. You are not descended from a nauseous compound of fanaticism and sensuality, whose only argument was the sword, and whose only paradise was a brothel. No Gothic scourge of God;

no Vandal pest of nations; no fabled fugitive from the flames of Troy; no bastard Norman tyrant appears among the list of worthies, who first landed on the rock, which your veneration has preserved, as a lasting monument of their achievement. The great actors of the day we now solemnize, were illustrious by their intrepid valor, no less than by their christian graces; but the clarion of conquest has not blazoned forth their names to all the winds of heaven. Their glory has not been wafted over oceans of blood to the remotest regions of the earth. They have not erected to themselves colossal statues upon pedestals of human bones, to provoke and insult the tardy hand of heavenly retribution. But theirs was "the better fortitude of patience and heroic martyrdom." Theirs was the gentle temper of christian kindness; the rigorous observance of reciprocal justice; the unconquerable soul of conscious integrity. Worldly fame has been parsimonious of her favor to the memory of those generous champions. Their numbers were small; their stations in life obscure; the object of their enterprize unostentatious; the theatre of their exploits remote: how could they possibly be favorites of worldly fame?—That common crier, whose existence is only known by the assemblage of multitudes: that pander of wealth and greatness, so eager to haunt the palaces of fortune, and so fastidious to the houseless dignity of virtue: that parasite of pride, ever scornful to meekness, and ever obsequious to insolent power: that heedless trumpeter, whose ears are deaf to modest merit, and whose eyes are blind to bloodless, distant excellence.

When the persecuted companions of Robinson, exiles from their native land, anxiously sued for the privilege of removing a thousand leagues more distant to an untried soil, a rigorous climate and a savage wilderness, for the sake of reconciling their sense of religious duty with their affections for their country, few, perhaps none of them, formed a conception of what

would be, within two centuries, the result of their undertaking. When the jealous and niggardly policy of their British sovereign, denied them even that humblest of requests, and instead of liberty, would barely consent to promise connivance, neither he nor they might be aware that they were laying the foundations of a power, and that he was sowing the seeds of a spirit, which, in less than two hundred years, would stagger the throne of his descendants, and shake his united kingdoms to the centre. So far is it from the ordinary habits of mankind, to calculate the importance of events in their elementary principles, that had the first colonists of our country ever intimated as a part of their designs, the project of founding a great and mighty nation, the finger of scorn would have pointed them to the cells of bedlam, as an abode more suitable for hatching vain empires than the solitude of a transatlantic desert.

These consequences, then so little foreseen, have unfolded themselves in all their grandeur, to the eyes of the present age. It is a common amusement of speculative minds, to contrast the magnitude of the most important events with the minuteness of their primeval causes, and the records of mankind are full of examples for such contemplations. It is, however, a more profitable employment to trace the constituent principles of future greatness in their kernel; to detect in the acorn at our feet the germ of that majestic oak, whose roots shoot down to the centre, and whose branches aspire to the skies. Let it be then our present occupation to inquire and endeavor to ascertain the causes first put in operation at the period of our commemoration, and already productive of such magnificent effects; to examine, with reiterated care and minute attention, the characters of those men who gave the first impulse to a new series of events in the history of the world; to applaud and emulate those qualities of their minds which we shall find deserving of our admiration; to recognize, with candor, those

features which forbid approbation or even require censure, and finally, to lay alike their frailties and their perfections to our own hearts, either as warning or as example.

Of the various European settlements upon this continent, which have finally merged in one independent nation, the first establishments were made at various times, by several nations, and under the influence of different motives. In many instances, the conviction of religious obligation formed one and a powerful inducement of the adventurers; but in none, excepting the settlement at Plymouth, did they constitute the sole and exclusive actuating cause. Worldly interest and commercial speculation entered largely into the views of other settlers: but the commands of conscience were the only *stimulus* to the emigrants from Leyden. Previous to their expedition hither, they had endured a long banishment from their native country. Under every species of discouragement, they undertook the voyage; they performed it in spite of numerous and almost insuperable obstacles; they arrived upon a wilderness bound with frost and hoary with snow, without the boundaries of their charter; outcasts from all human society; and coasted five weeks together, in the dead of winter, on this tempestuous shore, exposed at once to the fury of the elements, to the arrows of the native savage, and to the impending horrors of famine.

Courage and perseverance have a magical talisman, before which difficulties disappear, and obstacles vanish into air. These qualities have ever been displayed in their mightiest perfection, as attendants in the retinue of strong passions. From the first discovery of the western hemisphere by Columbus, until the settlement of Virginia, which immediately preceded that of Plymouth, the various adventurers from the ancient world had exhibited, upon innumerable occasions, that ardor of enterprize and that stubbornness of pursuit, which set all danger at defiance, and chain the

violence of nature at their feet. But they were all instigated by personal interests. Avarice and ambition had tuned their souls to that pitch of exaltation. Selfish passions were the parents of their heroism. It was reserved for the first settlers of New England to perform achievements equally arduous, to trample down obstructions equally formidable, to dispel dangers, equally terrific, under the single inspiration of conscience. To them, even liberty herself, was but a subordinate and secondary consideration. They claimed exemption from the mandates of human authority, as militating with their subjection to a superior power. Before the voice of heaven they silenced even the calls of their country.

Yet, while so deeply impressed with the sense of religious obligation, they felt, in all its energy, the force of that tender tie which binds the heart of every virtuous man to his native land. It was to renew that connexion with their country which had been severed by their compulsory expatriation, that they resolved to face all the hazards of a perilous navigation, and all the labors of a toilsome distant settlement. Under the mild protection of the Batavian government, they enjoyed already that freedom of religious worship, for which they had resigned so many comforts and enjoyments at home: but their hearts panted for a restoration to the bosom of their country. Invited and urged by the openhearted and truly benevolent people, who had given them an asylum from the persecution of their own kindred, to form their settlement within the territories then under their jurisdiction; the love of their country predominated over every influence save that of conscience alone, and they preferred the precarious chance of relaxation from the bigoted rigor of the English government to the certain liberality and alluring offers of the Hollanders. Observe, my countrymen, the generous patriotism, the cordial union of soul, the conscious, yet unaffected vigor, which beam in their application to the British monarch. "They

were well weaned from the delicate milk of their mother country, and inured to the difficulties of a strange land. They were knit together in a strict and sacred bond, to take care of the good of each other and of the whole. It was not with them as with other men, whom small things could discourage, or small discontents cause to wish themselves again at home." Children of these exalted Pilgrims! Is there one among you, who can hear the simple and pathetic energy of these expressions without tenderness and admiration? Venerated shades of our forefathers! No! ye were, indeed, not ordinary men! That country which had ejected you so cruelly from her bosom, you still delighted to contemplate in the character of an affectionate and beloved mother. The sacred bond which knit you together was indissoluble while you lived; and oh! may it be to your descendants the example and the pledge of harmony to the latest period of time! The difficulties and dangers, which so often had defeated attempts of similar establishments, were unable to subdue souls tempered like yours. You heard the rigid interdictions; you saw the menacing forms of toil and danger, forbidding your access to this land of promise: but you heard without dismay; you saw and disdained retreat. Firm and undaunted in the confidence of that sacred bond; conscious of the purity, and convinced of the importance of your motives, you put your trust in the protecting shield of Providence, and smiled defiance at the combining terrors of human malice and of elemental strife. These, in the accomplishment of your undertaking, you were summoned to encounter in their most hideous forms: these you met with that fortitude, and combatted with that perseverance which you had promised in their anticipation: these you completely vanquished in establishing the foundations of New England, and the day which we now commemorate is the perpetual memorial of your triumph.

It were an occupation, peculiarly pleasing, to cull

from our early historians, and exhibit before you, every detail of this transaction. To carry you in imagination on board their bark at the first moment of her arrival in the bay; to accompany Carver, Winslow, Bradford and Standish, in all their excursions upon the desolate coast; to follow them into every rivulet and creek where they endeavored to find a firm footing, and to fix, with a pause of delight and exultation, the instant when the first of these heroic adventurers alighted on the spot where you, their descendants, now enjoy the glorious and happy reward of their labors. But in this grateful task, your former orators, on this anniversary, have anticipated all that the most ardent industry could collect, and gratified all that the most inquisitive curiosity could desire. To you, my friends, every occurrence of that momentous period is already familiar. A transient allusion to a few characteristic incidents, which mark the peculiar history of the Plymouth settlers, may properly supply the place of a narrative, which, to this auditory, must be superfluous.

One of these remarkable incidents is the execution of that instrument of government by which they formed themselves into a body-politic, the day after their arrival upon the coast, and previous to their first landing. This is, perhaps, the only instance, in human history, of that positive, original social compact, which speculative philosophers have imagined as the only legitimate source of government. Here was a unanimous and personal assent, by all the individuals of the community, to the association by which they became a nation. It was the result of circumstances and discussions, which had occurred during their passage from Europe, and is a full demonstration that the nature of civil government, abstracted from the political institutions of their native country, had been an object of their serious meditation. The settlers of all the former European colonies had contented themselves with the powers conferred upon them by their respective charters, without looking beyond the seal of the royal parch-

ment for the measure of their rights, and the rule of their duties. The founders of Plymouth had been impelled by the peculiarities of their situation to examine the subject with deeper and more comprehensive research. After twelve years of banishment from the land of their first allegiance, during which they had been under an adoptive and temporary subjection to another sovereign, they must naturally have been led to reflect upon the relative rights and duties of allegiance and subjection. They had resided in a city, the seat of a university, where the polemical and political controversies of the time were pursued with uncommon fervor. In this period they had witnessed the deadly struggle between the two parties, into which the people of the United Provinces, after their separation from the crown of Spain, had divided themselves. The contest embraced within its compass not only theological doctrines, but political principles, and Maurice and Barnevelt were the temporal leaders of the same rival factions, of which Episcopius and Polyander, were the ecclesiastical champions. That the investigation of the fundamental principles of government was deeply implicated in these dissensions is evident from the immortal work of Grotius, upon the rights of war and peace, which undoubtedly originated from them. Grotius himself had been a most distinguished actor and sufferer in those important scenes of internal convulsion, and his work was first published* very shortly after the departure of our forefathers from Leyden. It is well known, that in the course of the contest, Mr. Robinson more than once appeared, with credit to himself as a public disputant against Episcopius: and from the manner in which the fact is related by Governor Bradford, it is apparent that the whole English church at Leyden took a zealous interest in the religious part of the controversy. As strangers in the land, it is presumable that they wisely and honorably

* In 1625.

avoided entangling themselves in the political contentions involved with it. Yet the theoretic principles, as they were drawn into discussion, could not fail to arrest their attention, and must have assisted them to form accurate ideas concerning the origin and extent of authority among men, independent of positive institutions. The importance of these circumstances will not be duly weighed without taking into consideration the state of opinions then prevalent in England. The general principles of government were there little understood and less examined. The whole substance of human authority was centred in the simple doctrine of royal prerogative, the origin of which was always traced in theory to divine institution. Twenty years later, the subject was more industriously sifted, and for half a century became one of the principal topics of controversy between the ablest and most enlightened men in the nation. The instrument of voluntary association, executed on board the Mayflower, testifies that the parties to it had anticipated the improvement of their nation.

Another incident, from which we may derive occasion for important reflections, was the attempt of these original settlers to establish among them that community of goods and of labor, which fanciful politicians, from the days of Plato to those of Rousseau, have recommended as the fundamental law of a perfect republic. This theory results, it must be acknowledged, from principles of reasoning, most flattering to the human character. If industry, frugality and disinterested integrity, were alike the virtues of all, there would, apparently, be more of the social spirit, in making all property a common stock, and giving to each individual a proportional title to the wealth of the whole. Such is the basis upon which Plato forbids, in his republic, the division of property. Such is the system upon which Rousseau pronounces the first man, who enclosed a field with a fence and said, this is mine, a traitor to the human species. A wiser

and more useful philosophy, however, directs us to consider man according to the nature in which he was formed; subject to infirmities, which no wisdom can remedy; to weaknesses, which no institution can strengthen; to vices, which no legislation can correct. Hence it becomes obvious, that separate property is the natural and indisputable right of separate exertion; that community of goods without community of toil is oppressive and unjust; that it counteracts the laws of nature, which prescribe, that he only who sows the seed shall reap the harvest; that it discourages all energy, by destroying its rewards; and makes the most virtuous and active members of society, the slaves and drudges of the worst. Such was the issue of this experiment among our forefathers, and the same event demonstrated the error of the system in the elder settlement of Virginia. Let us cherish that spirit of harmony, which prompted our forefathers to make the attempt, under circumstances more favorable to its success than, perhaps, ever occurred upon earth. Let us no less admire the candor with which they relinquished it, upon discovering its irremediable inefficacy. To found principles of government upon too advantageous an estimate of the human character, is an error of inexperience, the source of which is so amiable, that it is impossible to censure it with severity. We have seen the same mistake, committed in our own age, and upon a larger theatre. Happily for our ancestors, their situation allowed them to repair it, before its effects had proved destructive. They had no pride of vain philosophy to support, no perfidious rage of faction to glut, by persevering in their mistakes, until they should be extinguished in torrents of blood.

As the attempt to establish among themselves the community of goods was a seal of that sacred bond which knit them so closely together, so the conduct, they observed towards the natives of the country, displays their steadfast adherence to the rules of justice,

and their faithful attachment to those of benevolence and charity.

No European settlement, ever formed upon this continent, has been more distinguished for undeviating kindness and equity towards the savages. There are, indeed, moralists who have questioned the right of the Europeans to intrude upon the possessions of the aboriginals in any case, and under any limitations whatsoever. But have they maturely considered the whole subject? The Indian right of possession itself stands, with regard to the greatest part of the country, upon a questionable foundation. Their cultivated fields; their constructed habitations; a space of ample sufficiency for their subsistence, and whatever they had annexed to themselves by personal labor, was undoubtedly, by the laws of nature, theirs. But what is the right of a huntsman to the forest of a thousand miles over which he has accidentally ranged in quest of prey? Shall the liberal bounties of Providence to the race of man be monopolized by one of ten thousand for whom they were created? Shall the exuberant bosom of the common mother, amply adequate to the nourishment of millions, be claimed exclusively by a few hundreds of her offspring? Shall the lordly savage not only disdain the virtues and enjoyments of civilization himself, but shall he control the civilization of a world? Shall he forbid the wilderness to blossom like the rose? Shall he forbid the oaks of the forest to fall before the axe of industry, and rise again, transformed into the habitations of ease and elegance? Shall he doom an immense region of the globe to perpetual desolation, and, to hear the howlings of the tiger and the wolf, silence forever the voice of human gladness? Shall the fields and the vallies, which a beneficent God has formed to teem with the life of innumerable multitudes, be condemned to everlasting barrenness? Shall the mighty rivers, poured out by the hand of nature, as channels of communication between numerous nations, roll their waters in sullen si-

lence and eternal solitude to the deep? Have hundreds of commodious harbors, a thousand leagues of coast, and a boundless ocean, been spread in the front of this land, and shall every purpose of utility, to which they could apply, be prohibited by the tenant of the woods? No, generous philanthropists! Heaven has not been thus inconsistent in the works of its hands! Heaven has not thus placed at irreconcilable strife, its moral laws with its physical creation! The Pilgrims of Plymouth obtained their right of possession to the territory, on which they settled, by titles as fair and unequivocal as any human property can be held. By their voluntary association they recognized their allegiance to the government of Britain, and in process of time, received whatever powers and authorities could be conferred upon them by a charter from their sovereign. The spot on which they fixed had belonged to an Indian tribe, totally extirpated by that devouring pestilence, which had swept the country, shortly before their arrival. The territory, thus free from all exclusive possession, they might have taken by the natural right of occupancy. Desirous, however, of giving ample satisfaction to every pretence of prior right, by formal and solemn conventions with the chiefs of the neighboring tribes, they acquired the further security of a purchase. At their hands the children of the desert had no cause of complaint. On the great day of retribution, what thousands, what millions of the American race will appear at the bar of judgment to arraign their European, invading conquerors! Let us humbly hope, that the fathers of the Plymouth Colony will then appear in the whiteness of innocence. Let us indulge the belief, that they will not only be free from all accusation of injustice to these unfortunate sons of nature, but that the testimonials of their acts of kindness and benevolence towards them, will plead the cause of their virtues, as they are now authenticated by the records of history upon earth.

Religious discord has lost her sting; the cumbrous weapons of theological warfare are antiquated: the field of politics supplies the alchemists of our times, with materials of more fatal explosion, and the butchers of mankind no longer travel to another world for instruments of cruelty and destruction. Our age is too enlightened to contend upon topics, which concern only the interests of eternity; and men who hold in proper contempt all controversies about trifles, except such as inflame their own passions, have made it a common-place censure against your ancestors, that their zeal was enkindled by subjects of trivial importance; and that however aggrieved by the intolerance of others, they were alike intolerant themselves. Against these objections, your candid judgment will not require an unqualified justification; but your respect and gratitude for the founders of the state may boldly claim an ample apology. The original grounds of their separation from the church of England, were not objects of a magnitude to dissolve the bonds of communion; much less those of charity, between christian brethren of the same essential principles. Some of them, however, were not inconsiderable, and numerous inducements concurred to give them an extraordinary interest in their eyes. When that portentous system of abuses, the Papal dominion, was overturned, a great variety of religious sects arose in its stead, in the several countries, which for many centuries before had been screwed beneath its subjection. The fabric of the reformation, first undertaken in England upon a contracted basis, by a capricious and sanguinary tyrant, had been successively overthrown and restored, renewed and altered according to the varying humors and principles of four successive monarchs. To ascertain the precise point of division between the genuine institutions of christianity, and the corruptions accumulated upon them in the progress of fifteen centuries, was found a task of extreme difficulty throughout the christian world. Men of the profound-

est learning, of the sublimest genius, and of the purest integrity, after devoting their lives to the research, finally differed in their ideas upon many great points, both of doctrine and discipline. The main question, it was admitted on all hands, most intimately concerned the highest interests of man, both temporal and eternal. Can we wonder, that men who felt their happiness here and their hopes of hereafter, their worldly welfare and the kingdom of heaven at stake, should sometimes attach an importance beyond their intrinsic weight to collateral points of controversy, connected with the all-involving object of the reformation? The changes in the forms and principles of religious worship, were introduced and regulated in England by the hand of public authority. But that hand had not been uniform or steady in its operations. During the persecutions inflicted in the interval of Popish restoration under the reign of Mary, upon all who favored the reformation, many of the most zealous reformers had been compelled to fly their country. While residing on the continent of Europe, they had adopted the principles of the most complete and rigorous reformation, as taught and established by Calvin. On returning afterwards to their native country, they were dissatisfied with the partial reformation, at which, as they conceived, the English establishment had rested, and claiming the privileges of private conscience, upon which alone, any departure from the church of Rome could be justified, they insisted upon the right of adhering to the system of their own preference, and of course, upon that of non-conformity to the establishment prescribed by the royal authority. The only means used to convince them of error, and reclaim them from dissent, was force, and force served but to confirm the opposition, it was meant to suppress. By driving the founders of the Plymouth Colony into exile, it constrained them to absolute separation from the church of England, and by the refusal afterwards to allow them a positive toleration, even in this American

wilderness, the council of James the First, rendered that separation irreconcilable. Viewing their religious liberties here, as held only upon sufferance, yet bound to them by all the ties of conviction, and by all their sufferings for them, could they forbear to look upon every dissenter among themselves with a jealous eye? Within two years after their landing, they beheld a rival settlement* attempted in their immediate neighborhood; and not long after, the laws of self-preservation compelled them to break up a nest of revellers,† who boasted of protection from the mother country, and who had recurred to the easy, but pernicious resource of feeding their wanton idleness, by furnishing the savages with the means, the skill and the instruments of European destruction. Toleration, in that instance, would have been self-murder and many other examples might be alleged, in which their necessary measures of self-defence have been exaggerated into cruelty, and their most indispensable precautions distorted into persecution. Yet shall we not pretend that they were exempt from the common laws of mortality, or entirely free from all the errors of their age. Their zeal might sometimes be too ardent, but it was always sincere. At this day, religious indulgence is one of our clearest duties, because it is one of our undisputed rights. While we rejoice that the principles of genuine christianity have so far triumphed over the prejudices of a former generation, let us fervently hope for the day when it will prove equally victorious over the malignant passions of our own.

In thus calling your attention to some of the peculiar features in the principles, the character, and the history of your forefathers, it is as wide from my design, as I know it would be from your approbation, to adorn their memory with a chaplet plucked from the domain of others. The occasion and the day are more pecu-

* Weston's plantation at Wessagussett.

† Morton, and his party at Mount Wollaston.

liarily devoted to them, but let it never be dishonored with a contracted and exclusive spirit. Our affections as citizens embrace the whole extent of the union, and the names of Raleigh, Smith, Winthrop, Calvert, Penn and Oglethorpe, excite in our minds recollections equally pleasing, and gratitude equally fervent with those of Carver and Bradford. Two centuries have not yet elapsed since the first European foot touched the soil which now constitutes the American union. Two centuries more and our numbers must exceed those of Europe herself. The destinies of this empire, as they appear in prospect before us, disdain the powers of human calculation. Yet, as the original founder of the Roman state is said once to have lifted upon his shoulders the fame and fortunes of all his posterity, so let us never forget that the glory and greatness of all our descendants is in our hands. Preserve, in all their purity, refine, if possible, from all their alloy, those virtues which we this day commemorate as the ornament of our forefathers. Adhere to them with inflexible resolution, as to the horns of the altar; instill them with unwearied perseverance into the minds of your children; bind your souls and theirs to the national union as the chords of life are centred in the heart, and you shall soar with rapid and steady wing to the summit of human glory. Nearly a century ago, one of those rare minds* to whom it is given to discern future greatness in its seminal principles, upon contemplating the situation of this continent, pronounced in a vein of poetic inspiration,

‘Westward the Star of empire takes its way.’

Let us all unite in ardent supplications to the Founder of nations and the Builder of worlds, that what then was prophecy, may continue unfolding into history—that the dearest hopes of the human race may not be extinguished in disappointment, and that the last may prove the noblest empire of time.

* Bishop Berkeley.

EULOGY ON ALEXANDER HAMILTON,

PRONOUNCED AT THE REQUEST OF THE CITIZENS OF BOSTON,
JULY 26, 1804,

BY HARRISON G. OTIS.



WE are convened, afflicted fellow-citizens, to perform the only duties which our republics acknowledge or fulfil to their illustrious dead; to present to departed excellence an oblation of gratitude and respect; to inscribe its virtues on the urn which contains its ashes, and to consecrate its example by the tears and sympathy of an affectionate people.

Must we, then, realize that Hamilton is no more! Must the sod, not yet cemented on the tomb of Washington, still moist with our tears, be so soon disturbed to admit the beloved companion of Washington, the partner of his dangers, the object of his confidence, the disciple who leaned upon his bosom! Insatiable Death! Will not the heroes and statesmen, whom mad ambition has sent from the crimsoned fields of Europe, suffice to people thy dreary dominions! Thy dismal avenues have been thronged with princely martyrs and illustrious victims. Crowns and sceptres, the spoils of royalty, are among thy recent trophies, and the blood of innocence and valor has flowed in torrents at thy inexorable command. Such have been thy ravages in the old world. And in our infant country how small was the remnant of our revolutionary heroes which had been spared from thy fatal grasp! Could not our Warren, our Montgomery, our Mercer, our Greene, our Washington appease thy vengeance for a few short years! Shall none of our early patriots be permitted to behold the perfection of their own work in

the stability of our government and the maturity of our institutions! Or hast thou predetermined, dread King of Terrors! to blast the world's best hope, and by depriving us of all the conductors of our glorious revolution, compel us to bury our liberties in their tombs! O Hamilton! great would be the relief of my mind, were I permitted to exchange the arduous duty of attempting to portray the varied excellence of thy character, for the privilege of venting the deep and unavailing sorrow which swells my bosom, at the remembrance of the gentleness of thy nature, of thy splendid talents and placid virtues! But, my respected friends, an indulgence of these feelings would be inconsistent with that deliberate recital of the services and qualities of this great man, which is required by impartial justice and your expectations.

In governments which recognize the distinctions of splendid birth and titles, the details of illustrious lineage and connexions, become interesting to those who are accustomed to value those advantages. But in the man whose loss we deplore, the interval between manhood and death was so uniformly filled by a display of the energies of his mighty mind, that the world has scarcely paused to inquire into the story of his infant or puerile years. He was a planet, the dawn of which was not perceived; which rose with full splendor, and emitted a constant stream of glorious light until the hour of its sudden and portentous eclipse.

At the age of eighteen, while cultivating his mind at Columbia College, he was roused from the leisure and delights of scientific groves by the din of war. He entered the American army as an officer of artillery, and at that early period familiarized himself to wield both his sword and his pen in the service of his country. He developed at once the qualities which command precedence, and the modesty which conceals its pretensions. Frank, affable, intelligent and brave, young Hamilton became the favorite of his fellow-soldiers. His intuitive perception and cor-

rect judgment rendered him a rapid proficient in military science, and his merit silenced the envy which it excited.

A most honorable distinction now awaited him. He attracted the attention of the commander-in-chief, who appointed him an aid, and honored him with his confidence and friendship. This domestic relation afforded to both, frequent means of comparing their opinions upon the policy and destinies of our country, upon the sources of its future prosperity and grandeur, upon the imperfection of its existing establishments; and to digest those principles, which, in happier times, might be interwoven into a more perfect model of government. Hence, probably, originated that filial veneration for Washington and adherence to his maxims, which were ever conspicuous in the deportment of Hamilton; and hence the exalted esteem and predilection uniformly displayed by the magnanimous patron to the faithful and affectionate pupil.

While the disasters of the American army, and the perseverance of the British ministry, presented the gloomy prospect of protracted warfare, young Hamilton appeared to be content in his station, and with the opportunities which he had of fighting by the side, and executing the orders of his beloved chief. But the investment of the army of Cornwallis suddenly changed the aspect of affairs, and rendered it probable, that this campaign, if successful, would be the most brilliant and decisive of any that was likely to occur. It now appeared, that his heart had long panted for an occasion to signalize his intrepidity and devotion to the service of his country. He obtained, by earnest entreaties, the command of a detachment destined to storm the works of Yorktown. It is well known with what undaunted courage he pressed on to the assault, with unloaded arms, presented his bosom to the dangers of the bayonet, carried the fort. and thus eminently contributed to decide the fate of the battle and of his country. But even here the impetuosity of the

youthful conqueror was restrained by the clemency of the benevolent man: the butchery of the American garrison, at New London, would have justified and seemed to demand an exercise of the rigors of retaliation. This was strongly intimated to colonel Hamilton, but we find, in his report to his commanding officer, in his own words, that, "incapable of imitating examples of barbarity, and forgetting recent provocations, he spared every man who ceased to resist."

Having, soon afterwards, terminated his military career, he returned to New York, and qualified himself to commence practice as a counsellor at law. But the duties and emoluments of his profession were not then permitted to stifle his solicitude to give a correct tone to public opinion, by the propagation of principles worthy of adoption by a people who had just undertaken to govern themselves. He found the minds of men chafed and irritated by the recollection of their recent sufferings and dangers. The city of New York, so long a garrison, presented scenes and incidents, which naturally aggravated these dispositions, and too many were inclined to fan the flame of discord, and mar the enjoyment and advantages of peace, by fomenting the animosities engendered by the collisions of war. To sooth these angry passions; to heal these wounds; to demonstrate the folly and inexpediency of scattering the bitter tares of national prejudice and private rancor among the seeds of public prosperity, were objects worthy of the heart and head of Hamilton. To these he applied himself, and by a luminous pamphlet, assuaged the public resentment against those, whose sentiments had led them to oppose the revolution; and thus preserved from exile many valuable citizens, who have supported the laws and increased the opulence of their native state.

From this period, he appears to have devoted himself principally to professional occupations, which were multiplied by his increasing celebrity, until he became

a member of the convention, which met at Annapolis, merely for the purpose of devising a mode of levying and collecting a general impost. Although the object of this convention was thus limited, yet so manifold, in his view, were the defects of the old confederation, that a reform, in one particular, would be ineffectual; he, therefore, first suggested the proposal of attempting a radical change in its principles; and the address to the people of the United States, recommending a general convention, with more extensive powers, which was adopted by that assembly, was the work of his pen.*

To the second convention, which framed the constitution, he was also deputed as a delegate from the state of New York.

In that assemblage of the brightest jewels of America, the genius of Hamilton sparkled with pre-eminent lustre. The best of our orators were improved by the example of his eloquence. The most experienced of our statesmen were instructed by the solidity of his sentiments, and all were convinced of the utility and extent of his agency in framing the constitution.

When the instrument was presented to the people for their ratification, the obstacles incident to every attempt to combine the interests, views and opinions of the various states, threatened, in some of them, to frustrate the hopes and exertions of its friends. The fears of the timid, the jealousies of the ignorant, the arts of the designing, and the sincere conviction of the superficial, were arrayed into a formidable alliance, in opposition to the system. But the magic pen of Hamilton dissolved this league. Animated by the magnitude of his object, he enriched the daily papers with the researches of a mind teeming with political information. In these rapid essays, written amid the avocations of business, and under the pres-

* This information is derived from a respectable member of that convention, from the state of New York.

sure of the occasion, it would be natural to expect, that much would require revision and correction. But in the mind of Hamilton nothing was superficial but resentment of injuries ; nothing fugitive, but those transient emotions which sometimes lead virtue astray. These productions of his pen are now considered as a standard commentary upon the nature of our government ; and he lived to hear them quoted by his friends and adversaries, as high authority, in the tribunals of justice, and in the legislature of the nation.

When the Constitution was adopted, and Washington was called to the Presidency by his grateful country, our departed friend was appointed to the charge of the treasury department, and of consequence became a confidential member of the administration. In this new sphere of action, he displayed a ductility and extent of genius, a fertility in expedients, a faculty of arrangement, an industry in application to business, and a promptitude in despatch ; but beyond all, a purity of public virtue and disinterestedness, which are too mighty for the grasp of my feeble powers of description. Indeed, the public character of Hamilton, and his measures from this period, are so intimately connected with the history of our country, that it is impossible to do justice to one without devoting a volume to the other. The treasury of the United States, at the time of his entrance upon the duties of his office, was literally a creature of the imagination, and existed only in name, unless folios of unsettled balances, and bundles of reproachful claims were deserving the name of a treasury. Money there was none ; and of public credit scarcely a shadow remained. No national system for raising and collecting a revenue had been attempted, and no estimate could be formed. from the experiments of the different states, of the probable result of any project of deriving it from commerce. The national debt was not only unpaid, but its amount was a subject of uncertainty and conjecture. Such was the chaos from which the secretary was called upon to elicit

the elements of a regular system, adequate to the immediate exigencies of a new and expensive establishment, and to an honorable provision for the public debt. His arduous duty was not to reform abuses, but to create resources; not to improve upon precedent, but to invent a model. In an ocean of experiment, he had neither chart nor compass but those of his own invention. Yet such was the comprehensive vigor of his mind, that his original projects possessed the hardihood of settled regulations. His sketches were little short of the perfection of finished pictures. In the first session of Congress, he produced a plan for the organization of the treasury department, and for the collection of a national revenue; and in the second, a report of a system for funding the national debt. Great objections were urged against the expediency of the principles, assumed by him for the basis of his system; but no doubt remained of their effect. A dormant capital was revived, and with it commerce and agriculture awoke as from the sleep of death. By the enchantment of this "mighty magician," the beauteous fabric of public credit rose in full majesty upon the ruins of the old confederation; and men gazed with astonishment upon a youthful prodigy, who, at the age of thirty-three, having already been the ornament of the camp, the forum and the senate, was now suddenly transformed into an accomplished financier, and a self-taught adept, not only in the general principles, but the intricate details, of his new department.

It is not wonderful that such resplendent powers of doing right should have exposed him to the suspicion of doing wrong. He was suspected and accused. His political adversaries were his judges. Their investigation of his conduct and honorable acquittal added new lustre to his fame, and confirmed the national sentiment, that in his public character he was, indeed, "a man without fear and without reproach."

To his exertions in this department, we are indebted for many important institutions. Among others, the

plan of redeeming the public debt, and of a national bank to facilitate the operations of government, were matured and adopted under his auspices ; and so complete were his arrangements, that his successors, though men of undoubted talents, and one of them a political opponent, have found nothing susceptible of material improvement.

But the obligations of his country, during this period, were not confined to his merit as a financier.

The flame of insurrection was kindled in the western counties of Pennsylvania, and raged with such violence, that large detachments of military force were marched to the scene of the disturbance, and the presence of the great Washington was judged necessary to quell the increasing spirit of revolt. He ordered the secretary to quit the duties of his department, and attend him on the expedition. His versatile powers were immediately and efficaciously applied to restore the authority of the laws. The principal burden of the important civil and military arrangements, requisite for this purpose, devolved upon his shoulders. It was owing to his humanity, that the leaders of this rebellion escaped exemplary punishment : and the successful issue was, in public and unqualified terms, ascribed to him by those, whose political relations would not have prompted them to pay him the homage of unmerited praise.

He was highly instrumental in preserving our peace and neutrality, and saving us from the ruin which has befallen the republics of the old world. Upon this topic, I am desirous of avoiding every intimation which might prove offensive to individuals of any party. God forbid that the sacred sorrow, in which we all unite, should be disturbed by the mixture of any unkindly emotions ! I would merely do justice to this honored shade, without arraigning the motives of those who disapproved and opposed his measures.

The dangers, which menaced our infant government at the commencement of the French revolution, are no

longer a subject of controversy. The principles, professed by the first leaders of that revolution, were so congenial to those of the American people; their pretences of aiming merely at the reformation of abuses were so plausible; the spectacle of a great people struggling to recover their "long lost liberties" was so imposing and august; while that of a combination of tyrants to conquer and subjugate, was so revolting; the services, received from one of the belligerent powers, and the injuries inflicted by the other, were so recent in our minds, that the sensibility of the nation was excited to the most exquisite pitch. To this disposition, so favorable to the wishes of France, every appeal was made, which intrigue, corruption, flattery and threats could dictate. At this dangerous and dazzling crisis, there were but few men entirely exempt from the general delirium. Among that few was Hamilton. His penetrating eye discerned, and his prophetic voice foretold, the tendency and consequence of the first revolutionary movements. He was assured, that every people which should espouse the cause of France would pass under her yoke, and that the people of France, like every nation which surrenders its reason to the mercy of demagogues, would be driven by the storms of anarchy upon the shores of despotism. All this he knew was conformable to the invariable law of nature and experience of mankind. From the reach of this desolation he was anxious to save his country, and in the pursuit of his purpose, he breasted the assaults of calumny and prejudice. "The torrent roared, and he did buffet it." Appreciating the advantages of a neutral position, he co-operated with Washington, Adams, and the other patriots of that day, in the means best adapted to maintain it. The rights and duties of neutrality, proclaimed by the President, were explained and enforced by Hamilton in the character of *Pacificus*. The attempts to corrupt and intimidate were resisted. The British treaty was justified and defended as an honorable compact with our natural friends, and

pregnant with advantages, which have since been realized and acknowledged by its opponents.

By this pacific and vigorous policy, in the whole course of which the genius and activity of Hamilton were conspicuous, time and information were afforded to the American nation, and correct views were acquired of our situation and interests. We beheld the republics of Europe march in procession to the funeral of their own liberties, by the lurid light of the revolutionary torch. The tumult of the passions subsided, the wisdom of the administration was perceived, and America now remains a solitary monument in the desolated plains of liberty.

Having remained at the head of the treasury several years, and filled its coffers; having developed the sources of an ample revenue, and tested the advantages of his own system by his own experience; and having expended his private fortune; he found it necessary to retire from public employment, and to devote his attention to the claims of a large and dear family. What brighter instance of disinterested honor has ever been exhibited to an admiring world! That a man, upon whom devolved the task of originating a system of revenue for a nation; of devising the checks in his own department; of providing for the collection of sums, the amount of which was conjectural; that a man, who anticipated the effects of a funding system, yet a secret in his own bosom, and who was thus enabled to have secured a princely fortune, consistently with principles esteemed fair by the world; that such a man, by no means addicted to an expensive or extravagant style of living, should have retired from office destitute of means adequate to the wants of mediocrity, and have resorted to professional labor for the means of decent support, are facts which must instruct and astonish those, who, in countries habituated to corruption and venality, are more attentive to the gains than to the duties of official station. Yet Hamilton was that man. It was a fact, al-

ways known to his friends, and it is now evident from his testament, made under a deep presentiment of his approaching fate. Blush, then, ministers and warriors of imperial France, who have deluded your nation by pretensions to a disinterested regard for its liberties and rights! Disgorge the riches extorted from your fellow-citizens, and the spoils amassed from confiscation and blood! Restore to impoverished nations the price paid by them for the privilege of slavery, and now appropriated to the refinements of luxury and corruption! Approach the tomb of Hamilton, and compare the insignificance of your gorgeous palaces with the awful majesty of this tenement of clay!

We again accompany our friend in the walks of private life, and in the assiduous pursuit of his profession, until the aggressions of France compelled the nation to assume the attitude of defence. He was now invited by the great and enlightened statesman, who had succeeded to the presidency, and at the express request of the commander-in-chief, to accept of the second rank in the army. Though no man had manifested a greater desire to avoid war, yet it is freely confessed, that when war appeared to be inevitable, his heart exulted in "the tented field," and he loved the life and occupation of a soldier. His early habits were formed amid the fascinations of the camp. And though the pacific policy of Adams once more rescued us from war, and shortened the existence of the army establishment, yet its duration was sufficient to secure to him the love and confidence of officers and men, to enable him to display the talents and qualities of a great general, and to justify the most favorable prognostics of his prowess in the field.

Once more this excellent man unloosed the helmet from his brow, and returned to the duties of the forum. From this time he persisted in a firm resolution to decline all civil honors and promotion, and to live a private citizen, unless again summoned to the defence of his country. He became more than ever assiduous

in his practice at the bar, and intent upon his plans of domestic happiness, until a nice and mistaken estimate of the claims of honor, impelled him to the fatal act which terminated his life.

While it is far from my intention to draw a veil over this last great error, or in the least measure to justify a practice, which threatens in its progress to destroy the liberty of speech and of opinion; it is but justice to the deceased, to state the circumstances which should palliate the resentment that may be excited in some good minds towards his memory. From the last sad memorial which we possess from his hand, and in which, if our tears permit, we may trace the sad presage of the impending catastrophe, it appears that his religious principles were at variance with the practice of duelling, and that he could not reconcile his benevolent heart to shed the blood of an adversary in private combat, even in his own defence. It was, then, from public motives that he committed this great mistake. It was for the benefit of his country, that he erroneously conceived himself obliged to make the painful sacrifice of his principles, and to expose his life. The sober judgment of the man, was confounded and misdirected by the jealous honor of the soldier; and he evidently adverted to the possibility of events that might render indispensable, the esteem and confidence of soldiers as well as of citizens.

But while religion mourns for this aberration of the judgment of a great man, she derives some consolation from his testimony in her favor. If she rejects the apology, she admits the repentance; and if the good example be not an atonement, it may be an antidote for the bad. Let us, then, in an age of infidelity, join, in imagination, the desolate group of wife and children and friends, who surround the dying bed of the inquisitive, the luminous, the scientific Hamilton, and witness his attestation to the truth and comforts of our holy religion. Let us behold the lofty warrior bow his head before the cross of the meek and lowly Jesus;

and he who had so lately graced the sumptuous tables and society of the luxurious and rich, now, regardless of these meaner pleasures, and aspiring to be admitted to a sublime enjoyment with which no worldly joys can compare; to a devout and humble participation of the bread of life. The religious fervor of his last moments was not an impulse of decaying nature yielding to its fears, but the result of a firm conviction of the truths of the gospel. I am well informed, that in early life, the evidences of the Christian religion had attracted his serious examination, and obtained his deliberate assent to their truth, and that he daily, upon his knees, devoted a portion of time to a compliance with one of its most important injunctions: and that, however these edifying propensities might have yielded occasionally to the business and temptations of life, they always resumed their influence, and would probably have prompted him to a public profession of his faith in his Redeemer.

Such was the untimely fate of Alexander Hamilton, whose character warrants the apprehension, that "take him for all in all, we ne'er shall look upon his like again."

Nature, even in the partial distribution of her favors, generally limits the attainments of great men within distinct and particular spheres of eminence. But he was the darling of nature, and privileged beyond the rest of her favorites. His mind caught, at a glance, that perfect comprehension of a subject, for which others are indebted to patient labor and investigation. In whatever department he was called to act, he discovered an intuitive knowledge of its duties, which gave him an immediate ascendancy over those who had made them the study of their lives; so that, after running through the circle of office, as a soldier, statesman and financier, no question remained for which he had been qualified, but only in which he had evinced the most superlative merit. He did not dissemble his attachment to a military life, nor his con-

sciousness of possessing talents for command ; yet no man more strenuously advocated the rights of the civil over the military power, nor more cheerfully abdicated command and returned to the rank of the citizen, when his country could dispense with the necessity of an army.

In his private profession, at a bar abounding with men of learning and experience, he was without a rival. He arranged, with the happiest facility, the materials collected in the vast storehouse of his memory, surveyed his subject under all its aspects, and enforced his arguments with such powers of reasoning, that nothing was wanting to produce conviction, and generally to ensure success. His eloquence combined the nervousness and copious elegance of the Greek and Roman schools, and gave him the choice of his clients and his business. These wonderful powers were accompanied by a natural politeness and winning condescension, which forestalled the envy of his brethren. Their hearts were gained before their pride was alarmed ; and they united in their approbation of a pre-eminence, which reflected honor on their fraternity.

From such talents, adorned by incorruptible honesty and boundless generosity, an immense personal influence over his political and private friends was inseparable ; and by those who did not know him, and who saw the use to which ambition might apply it, he was sometimes suspected of views unpropitious to the nature of our government. The charge was inconsistent with the exertions he had made, to render that government, in its present form, worthy of the attachment and support of the people, and his voluntary relinquishment of the means of ambition, the purse-strings of the nation. He was, indeed, ambitious, but not of power ; he was ambitious only to convince the world of the spotless integrity of his administration and character. This was the key to the finest sensibilities of his heart. He shrunk from the imputation

of misconduct in public life: and if his judgment ever misled him, it was only when warped by an excessive eagerness to vindicate himself at the expense of his discretion. To calumny, in every other shape, he opposed the defence of dignified silence and contempt.

Had such a character been exempt from foibles and frailties, it would not have been human. Yet so small was the catalogue of these, that they would have escaped observation, but for the unparalleled frankness of his nature, which prompted him to confess them to the world. He did not consider greatness as an authority for habitual vice; and he repented, with such contrition of casual error, that none remained offended but those who never had a right to complain. The virtues of his private and domestic character comprised whatever conciliates affection and begets respect. To envy he was a stranger, and of merit and talents the unaffected eulogist and admirer. The charms of his conversation, the brilliance of his wit, his regard to decorum, his ineffable good humor, which led him down, from the highest range of intellect, to the level of colloquial pleasantry, will never be forgotten, perhaps never equalled.

To observe that such a man was dear to his family would be superfluous. To describe how dear, impossible. Of this we might obtain some adequate conception, could we look into the retreat which he had chosen for the solace of his future years; which, enlivened by his presence, was so lately the mansion of cheerfulness and content; but now, alas! of lamentation and wo!—

“For him no more the blazing hearth shall burn,”

Or tender consort wait with anxious care;

“No children run to lisp their sire’s return,

Or climb his knees, the envied kiss to share.”

With his eye upon the eternal world, this dying hero had been careful to prepare a testament, almost for the sole purpose of bequeathing to his orphans the rich

legacy of his principles; and having exhibited, in his last hours, to this little band the manner in which a Christian should die, he drops, in his flight to heaven, a summary of the principles, by which a man of honor should live.

The universal sorrow manifested, in every part of the union, upon the melancholy exit of this great man, is an unequivocal testimonial of the public opinion of his worth. The place of his residence is overspread with a gloom, which bespeaks the presence of a public calamity, and the prejudices of party are absorbed in the overflowing tide of national grief.

It is, indeed, a subject of consolation, that diversity of political opinions has not yet extinguished the sentiment of public gratitude. There is yet a hope, that events like these, which bring home to our bosoms the sensation of a common loss, may yet remind us of our common interest, and of the times when, with one accord, we joined in the homage of respect to our living as well as to our deceased worthies.

Should those days once more return, when the people of America, united as they once were united, shall make merit the measure of their approbation and confidence, we may hope for a constant succession of patriots and heroes. But should our country be rent by factions, and the merit of the man be estimated by the zeal of the partizan, irreparable will be the loss of those few men, who, having once been esteemed by all, might again have acquired the confidence of all, and saved their country, in an hour of peril, by their talents and virtues.—

“So stream the sorrows that embalm the brave;
The tears which virtue sheds on glory's grave.”

A DISCOURSE.

DELIVERED IN THE CITY OF ALBANY, OCCASIONED BY THE
DEATH OF ALEXANDER HAMILTON, JULY 9, 1804,

BY ELIPHALET NOTT,

PASTOR OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THAT PLACE.



“HOW ARE THE MIGHTY FALLEN!”

THE occasion explains the choice of my subject—a subject on which I enter in obedience to your request. You have assembled to express your elegiac sorrows, and sad and solemn weeds cover you.

Before such an audience, and on such an occasion, I enter on the duty assigned me with trembling. Do not mistake my meaning. I tremble indeed—not, however, through fear of failing to merit your applause; for what have I to do with that when addressing the dying, and treading on the ashes of the dead; not through fear of failing justly to portray the character of that great man, who is at once the theme of my encomium and regret. He needs not eulogy. His work is finished, and death has removed him beyond my censure, and I would fondly hope, through grace, above my praise. You will ask then, why I tremble? I tremble to think that I am called to attack, from this place, a crime, the very idea of which almost freezes one with horror—a crime, too, which exists among the polite and polished orders of society, and which is accompanied with every aggravation; committed with cool deliberation, and openly in the face of day! But I have a duty to perform: and difficult and awful as that duty is, I will not shrink from it.

Would to God my talents were adequate to the occasion. But such as they are, I devoutly proffer them to unfold the nature and counteract the influence of that barbarous custom, which, like a resistless torrent, is undermining the foundations of civil government, breaking down the barriers of social happiness, and sweeping away virtue, talents and domestic felicity, in its desolating course.

Another and an illustrious character—a father—a general—a statesman—the very man who stood on an eminence and without a rival among sages and heroes, the future hope of his country in danger—this man, yielding to the influence of a custom, which deserves our eternal reprobation, has been brought to an untimely end.

That the deaths of great and useful men should be particularly noticed, is equally the dictate of reason and revelation. The tears of Israel flowed at the decease of good Josiah, and to his memory the funeral women chanted the solemn dirge. But neither examples nor arguments are necessary to wake the sympathies of a grateful people on such occasions. The death of public benefactors surcharges the heart, and it spontaneously disburdens itself by a flow of sorrows. Such was the death of Washington: to embalm whose memory, and perpetuate whose deathless fame, we lent our feeble, but unnecessary services. Such, also, and more peculiarly so, has been the death of Hamilton. The tidings of the former moved us, mournfully moved us, and we wept. The account of the latter chilled our hopes, and curdled our blood. The former died in a good old age; the latter was cut off in the midst of his usefulness. The former was a customary providence: we saw in it, if I may speak so, the finger of God, and rested in his sovereignty. The latter is not attended with this soothing circumstance.

The fall of Hamilton, owes its existence to mad delirium, and is marked by violence. The time, the place, the circumstances, are arranged with barbarous

coolness. The instrument of death is levelled in daylight, and with well directed skill pointed at his heart. Alas! the event has proven that it was but too well directed. Wounded, mortally wounded, on the very spot which still smoked with the blood of a favorite son, into the arms of his indiscreet and cruel friend the father fell.

Ah! had he fallen in the course of nature; or jeopardizing his life in defence of his country; had he fallen—but he did not. He fell in single combat—pardon my mistake—he did not fall in single combat. His noble nature refused to endanger the life of his antagonist. But he exposed his own life. This was his crime: and the sacredness of my office forbids that I should hesitate explicitly to declare it so. He did not hesitate to declare it so himself. “My religious and moral principles are strongly opposed to duelling.” These are his words before he ventured to the field of death. “I view the late transaction with sorrow and contrition.” These are his words after his return. Humiliating end of illustrious greatness! “How are the mighty fallen!” And shall the mighty thus fall? Thus shall the noblest lives be sacrificed and the richest blood be spilt? “Tell it not in Gath; publish it not in the streets of Askelon!”

Think not that the fatal issue of the late inhuman interview was fortuitous. No; the hand, that guides unseen the arrow of the archer, steadied and directed the arm of the duellist. And why did it thus direct it? As a solemn *memento*—as a loud and awful warning to a community where justice has slumbered—and slumbered—and slumbered—while the wife has been robbed of her partner, the mother of her hopes, and life after life rashly, and with an air of triumph, sported away.

And was there, O my God! no other sacrifice valuable enough—would the cry of no other blood reach the place of retribution and wake justice, dozing over her awful seat! But though justice should still slum-

ber, and retribution be delayed, we, who are the ministers of that God who will judge the judges of the world, and whose malediction rests on him who does his work unfaithfully, we will not keep silence.

I feel, my brethren, how incongruous my subject is with the place I occupy. It is humiliating; it is distressing in a Christian country, and in churches consecrated to the religion of Jesus, to be obliged to attack a crime which outstrips barbarism, and would even sink the character of a generous savage. But humiliating as it is, it is necessary. And must we then, even for a moment, forget the elevation on which grace hath placed us, and the light which the gospel sheds around us? Must we place ourselves back in the midst of barbarism; and instead of hearers, softened to forgiveness by the love of Jesus, filled with noble sentiments towards our enemies, and waiting for occasions, after the example of divinity, to do them good; instead of such hearers, must we suppose ourselves addressing hearts petrified to goodness, incapable of mercy, and boiling with revenge? Must we, O my God! instead of exhorting those who hear us, to go on unto perfection, adding to virtue charity, and to charity brotherly kindness; must we, as if surrounded by an auditory, just emerging out of darkness, and still cruel and ferocious, reason to convince them that revenge is improper, and that to commit deliberate murder, is sin?

Yes, we must do this. Repeated violations of the law, and the sanctuary, which the guilty find in public sentiment, prove that it is necessary.

Withdraw, therefore, for a moment, ye celestial spirits—ye holy angels accustomed to hover round these altars, and listen to those strains of grace which, heretofore, have filled this house of God. Other subjects occupy us. Withdraw, therefore, and leave us; leave us to exhort Christian parents to restrain their vengeance, and at least to keep back their hands from blood; to exhort youth, nurtured in Chris-

tian families, not rashly to sport with life, nor lightly to wring the widow's heart with sorrows, and fill the orphan's eye with tears.

In accomplishing the object which is before me, it will not be expected, as it is not necessary, that I should give a history of duelling. You need not be informed, that it originated in a dark and barbarous age. The polished Greek knew nothing of it; the noble Roman was above it. Rome held in equal detestation the man who exposed his life unnecessarily, and him, who refused to expose it when the public good required it.* Her heroes were superior to private contests. They indulged no vengeance except against the enemies of their country. Their swords were not drawn unless her honor was in danger; which honor they defended with their swords not only, but shielded with their bosoms also, and were then prodigal of their blood. But though Greece and Rome knew nothing of duelling, it exists. It exists among us: and it exists at once the most rash, the most absurd and guilty practice, that ever disgraced a Christian nation.

Guilty—because it is a violation of the law. What law? The law of God. "Thou shalt not kill." This prohibition was delivered by God himself, at Sinai, to the Jews. And, that it is of universal and perpetual obligation, is manifest from the nature of the crime prohibited not only, but also from the express declaration of the Christian Lawgiver, who hath recognized its justice, and added to it the sanctions of his own authority.

"Thou shalt not kill." Who? Thou, creature. I, the Creator, have given life, and thou shalt not take it away! When and under what circumstances may I not take away life? Never, and under no circumstances, without my permission. It is obvious, that no discretion whatever is here given. The prohibition is addressed to every individual where the law of

* Sallust de bell. Catil. ix.

God is promulgated, and the terms made use of are express and unequivocal. So that life cannot be taken under any pretext, without incurring guilt, unless by a permission sanctioned by the same authority which sanctions the general law prohibiting it. From this law, it is granted there are exceptions. These exceptions, however, do not result from any sovereignty which one creature has over the existence of another, but from the positive appointment of that eternal Being, whose "is the world and the fulness thereof. In whose hand is the soul of every living creature, and the breath of all mankind." Even the authority, which we claim over the lives of animals, is not founded on a natural right, but on a positive grant, made by the Deity himself to Noah and his sons.* This grant contains our warrant for taking the lives of animals. But if we may not take the lives of animals without permission from God, much less may we the life of man, made in his image.

In what cases, then, has the Sovereign of life given this permission? In rightful war;† by the civil magistrate;‡ and in necessary self-defence.§ Besides these, I do not hesitate to declare, that in the oracles of God there are no other. He, therefore, who takes life in any other case, under whatever pretext, takes it unwarrantably, is guilty of what the scriptures call murder, and exposes himself to the malediction of that God, who is an avenger of blood, and who hath said, "At the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man—Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed."

The duellist contravenes the law of God not only, but the law of man also. To the prohibition of the former have been added the sanctions of the latter. Life taken in a duel, by the common law, is murder.

* Genesis ix. 3.

† 2 Samuel x. 12. Jeremiah xlviii. 10. Luke iii. 14.

‡ Exodus xxi. 12.

§ Exodus xxii. 2.

And where this is not the case, the giving and receiving of a challenge only, is, by statute, considered a high misdemeanor, for which the principal and his second are declared infamous, and disfranchised for twenty years. Under what accumulated circumstances of aggravation does the duellist jeopardize his own life, or take the life of his antagonist? I am sensible that, in a licentious age, and when laws are made to yield to the vices of those who move in the higher circles, this crime is called by I know not what mild and accommodating name. But before these altars; in this house of God, what is it? It is murder—deliberate, aggravated murder. If the duellist deny this, let him produce his warrant from the Author of life, for taking away from his creature the life which had been sovereignly given. If he cannot do this, beyond all controversy, he is a murderer; for murder consists in taking away life without the permission, and contrary to the prohibition of him who gave it.

Who is it, then, that calls the duellist to the dangerous and deadly combat? Is it God? No; on the contrary, He forbids it. Is it, then, his country? No; she also utters her prohibitory voice. Who is it then? A man of honor. And who is this man of honor? A man, perhaps, whose honor is a name; who prates, with polluted lips, about the sacredness of character, when his own is stained with crimes, and needs but the single shade of murder to complete the dismal and sickly picture. Every transgression of the divine law implies great guilt, because it is the transgression of infinite authority. But the crime of deliberately and lightly taking life, has peculiar aggravations. It is a crime committed against the written law not only, but also against the dictates of reason, the remonstrances of conscience, and every tender and amiable feeling of the heart. To the unfortunate sufferer, it is the wanton violation of his most sacred rights. It snatches him from his friends and his comforts; terminates his state of trial, and precipitates him, un-

called for, and perhaps unprepared, into the presence of his Judge.

You will say the duellist feels no malice. Be it so. Malice, indeed, is murder in principle. But there may be murder in reason, and in fact, where there is no malice. Some other unwarrantable passion or principle may lead to the unlawful taking of human life. The highwayman, who cuts the throat and rifles the pocket of the passing traveller, feels no malice. And could he, with equal ease and no greater danger of detection, have secured his booty without taking life, he would have stayed his arm over the palpitating bosom of his victim, and let the plundered suppliant pass. Would the imputation of cowardice have been inevitable to the duellist, if a challenge had not been given or accepted? The imputation of want had been no less inevitable to the robber, if the money of the passing traveller had not been secured. Would the duellist have been willing to have spared the life of his antagonist, if the point of honor could otherwise have been gained? So would the robber if the point of property could have been. Who can say that the motives of the one are not as urgent as the motives of the other? And the means, by which both obtain the object of their wishes, are the same. Thus, according to the dictates of reason, as well as the law of God, the highwayman and the duellist stand on ground equally untenable, and support their guilty havoc of the human race by arguments equally fallacious.

Is duelling guilty?—So it is absurd. It is absurd as a punishment, for it admits of no proportion to crimes: and besides, virtue and vice, guilt and innocence, are equally exposed by it, to death or suffering. As a reparation, it is still more absurd, for it makes the injured liable to a still greater injury. And as the vindication of personal character, it is absurd even beyond madness.

One man of honor, by some inadvertence, or perhaps with design, injures the sensibility of another man

of honor. In perfect character, the injured gentleman resents it. He challenges the offender. The offender accepts the challenge. The time is fixed. The place is agreed upon. The circumstances, with an air of solemn mania, are arranged; and the principals, with their seconds and surgeons, retire under the covert of some solitary hill, or upon the margin of some unfrequented beach, to settle this important question of honor, by stabbing or shooting at each other. One or the other, or both the parties, fall in this polite and gentlemanlike contest. And what does this prove? It proves that one or the other, or both of them, as the case may be, are marksmen. But it affords no evidence that either of them possess honor, probity or talents. It is true, that he who falls in single combat, has the honor of being murdered: and he who takes his life, the honor of a murderer. Besides this, I know not of any glory which can redound to the infatuated combatants, except it be what results from having extended the circle of wretched widows, and added to the number of hapless orphans. And yet, terminate as it will, this frantic meeting, by a kind of magic influence, entirely varnishes over a defective and smutty character; transforms vice to virtue, cowardice to courage; makes falsehood, truth; guilt, innocence—in one word, it gives a new complexion to the whole state of things. The Ethiopian changes his skin, the leopard his spot, and the debauched and treacherous—having shot away the infamy of a sorry life, comes back from the field of perfectibility, quite regenerated, and, in the fullest sense, an honorable man. He is now fit for the company of gentlemen. He is admitted to that company, and should he again, by acts of vileness, stain this purity of character so nobly acquired, and should any one have the effrontery to say he has done so, again he stands ready to vindicate his honor, and by another act of homicide, to wipe away the stain which has been attached to it.

I might illustrate this article by example. I might

produce instances of this mysterious transformation of character, in the sublime circles of moral refinement, furnished by the higher orders of the fashionable world, which the mere firing of pistols has produced. But the occasion is too awful for irony. Absurd as duelling is, were it absurd only, though we might smile at the weakness and pity the folly of its abettors, there would be no occasion for seriously attacking them. But to what has been said, I add, that duelling is rash and presumptuous.

Life is the gift of God, and it was never bestowed to be sported with. To each, the Sovereign of the universe has marked out a sphere to move in, and assigned a part to act. This part respects ourselves not only, but others also. Each lives for the benefit of all.

As in the system of nature the sun shines, not to display its own brightness and answer its own convenience, but to warm, enlighten and bless the world; so in the system of animated beings, there is a dependence, a correspondence, and a relation, through an infinitely extended, dying and reviving universe—"in which no man liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself." Friend is related to friend; the father to his family; the individual to community. To every member of which, having fixed his station and assigned his duty, the God of nature says, "Keep this trust—defend this post." For whom? For thy friends, thy family, thy country. And having received such a charge, and for such a purpose, to desert it is rashness and temerity.

Since the opinions of men are as they are, do you ask, how you shall avoid the imputation of cowardice, if you do not fight when you are injured? Ask your family how you will avoid the imputation of cruelty; ask your conscience how you will avoid the imputation of guilt: ask God how you will avoid his malediction, if you do? These are previous questions. Let these first be answered, and it will be easy to reply to

any which may follow them. If you only accept a challenge, when you believe, in your conscience, that duelling is wrong, you act the coward. The dastardly fear of the world governs you. Awed by its menaces, you conceal your sentiments, appear in disguise, and act in guilty conformity to principles not your own, and that too in the most solemn moment, and when engaged in an act which exposes you to death.

But if it be rashness to accept, how passing rashness is it, in a sinner, to give a challenge? Does it become him, whose life is measured out by crimes, to be extreme to mark, and punctilious to resent, whatever is amiss in others? Must the duellist, who now disdaining to forgive, so imperiously demands satisfaction to the uttermost—must this man himself, trembling at the recollection of his offences, presently appear a suppliant before the mercy-seat of God? Imagine this, and the case is not imaginary, and you cannot conceive an instance of greater inconsistency, or of more presumptuous arrogance. Therefore, “avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath; for vengeance is mine, I will repay it, saith the Lord.” Do you ask, then, how you shall conduct towards your enemy, who hath lightly done you wrong? If he be hungry, feed him; if naked, clothe him; if thirsty, give him drink. Such, had you preferred your question to Jesus Christ, is the answer he had given you. By observing which, you will usually subdue, and always act more honorably than your enemy.

I feel, my brethren, as a minister of Jesus and a teacher of his gospel, a noble elevation on this article. Compare the conduct of the Christian, acting in conformity to the principles of religion, and of the duellist, acting in conformity to the principles of honor, and let reason say, which bears the marks of the most exalted greatness. Compare them, and let reason say, which enjoys the most calm serenity of mind

in time, and which is likely to receive the plaudit of his Judge in immortality. God, from his throne, beholds not a nobler object on his footstool, than the man who loves his enemies, pities their errors, and forgives the injuries they do him. This is, indeed, the very spirit of the heavens. It is the image of His benignity, whose glory fills them.

To return to the subject before us—guilty, absurd and rash, as duelling is, it has its advocates. And had it not had its advocates—had not a strange preponderance of opinion been in favor of it, never, O lamentable Hamilton! hadst thou thus fallen, in the midst of thy days, and before thou hadst reached the zenith of thy glory!

O that I possessed the talent of eulogy, and that I might be permitted to indulge the tenderness of friendship, in paying the last tribute to his memory! O that I were capable of placing this great man before you! Could I do this, I should furnish you with an argument, the most practical, the most plain, the most convincing, except that drawn from the mandate of God, that was ever furnished against duelling—that horrid practice, which has, in an awful moment, robbed the world of such exalted worth. But I cannot do this; I can only hint at the variety and exuberance of his excellence.

The Man, on whom nature seems originally to have impressed the stamp of greatness, whose genius beamed, from the retirement of collegiate life, with a radiance which dazzled, and a loveliness which charmed the eye of sages.

The Hero, called from his sequestered retreat, whose first appearance in the field, though a stripling, conciliated the esteem of Washington, our good old father. Moving by whose side, during all the perils of the revolution, our young chieftain was a contributor to the veteran's glory, the guardian of his person, and the copartner of his toils.

The Conqueror, who, sparing of human blood, when

victory favored, stayed the uplifted arm, and nobly said to the vanquished enemy, "Live!"

The Statesman, the correctness of whose principles, and the strength of whose mind, are inscribed on the records of Congress, and on the annals of the council-chamber; whose genius impressed itself upon the constitution of his country; and whose memory, the government, illustrious fabric, resting on this basis, will perpetuate while it lasts: and shaken by the violence of party, should it fall, which may heaven avert, his prophetic declarations will be found inscribed on its ruins.

The Counsellor, who was at once the pride of the bar and the admiration of the court; whose apprehensions were quick as lightning, and whose development of truth was luminous as its path; whose argument no change of circumstances could embarrass; whose knowledge appeared intuitive; and who, by a single glance, and with as much facility as the eye of the eagle passes over the landscape, surveyed the whole field of controversy; saw in what way truth might be most successfully defended, and how error must be approached; and who, without ever stopping, ever hesitating, by a rapid and manly march, led the listening judge and the fascinated juror, step by step, through a delightful region, brightening as he advanced, till his argument rose to demonstration, and eloquence was rendered useless by conviction; whose talents were employed on the side of righteousness; whose voice, whether in the council-chamber, or at the bar of justice, was virtue's consolation: at whose approach oppressed humanity felt a secret rapture, and the heart of injured innocence leapt for joy.

Where Hamilton was—in whatever sphere he moved, the friendless had a friend, the fatherless a father, and the poor man, though unable to reward his kindness, found an advocate. It was when the rich oppressed the poor; when the powerful menaced the

defenceless; when truth was disregarded, or the eternal principles of justice violated; it was on these occasions, that he exerted all his strength; it was on these occasions, that he sometimes soared so high and shone with a radiance so transcendent, I had almost said, so "heavenly, as filled those around him with awe, and gave to him the force and authority of a prophet."

The Patriot, whose integrity baffled the scrutiny of inquisition; whose manly virtue never shaped itself to circumstances; who, always great, always himself, stood amidst the varying tides of party, firm, like the rock, which, far from land, lifts its majestic top above the waves, and remains unshaken by the storms which agitate the ocean.

The Friend, who knew no guile—whose bosom was transparent and deep; in the bottom of whose heart was rooted every tender and sympathetic virtue; whose various worth opposing parties acknowledged while alive, and on whose tomb they unite, with equal sympathy and grief, to heap their honors.

I know he had his failings. I see, on the picture of his life—a picture rendered awful by greatness, and luminous by virtue, some dark shades. On these, let the tear, that pities human weakness, fall: on these, let the veil, which covers human frailty, rest. As a hero, as a statesman, as a patriot, he lived nobly: and would to God I could add, he nobly fell. Unwilling to admit his error in this respect, I go back to the period of discussion. I see him resisting the threatened interview. I imagine myself present in his chamber. Various reasons, for a time, seem to hold his determination in arrest. Various and moving objects pass before him, and speak a dissuasive language. His country, which may need his counsels to guide, and his arm to defend, utters her *veto*. The partner of his youth, already covered with weeds, and whose tears flow down into her bosom, intercedes! His babes, stretching out their little hands and pointing to a

weeping mother, with lisping eloquence, but eloquence which reaches a parent's heart, cry out, "Stay, stay, dear papa, and live for us!" In the mean time, the spectre of a fallen son, pale and ghastly, approaches, opens his bleeding bosom, and as the harbinger of death, points to the yawning tomb, and warns a hesitating father of the issue! He pauses: reviews these sad objects: and reasons on the subject. I admire his magnanimity, I approve his reasoning, and I wait to hear him reject, with indignation, the murderous proposition, and to see him spurn from his presence the presumptuous bearer of it. But I wait in vain. It was a moment in which his great wisdom forsook him—a moment in which Hamilton was not himself. He yielded to the force of an imperious custom: and yielding, he sacrificed a life in which all had an interest—and he is lost—lost to his country, lost to his family, lost to us. For this act, because he disclaimed it, and was penitent, I forgive him. But there are those whom I cannot forgive. I mean not his antagonist; over whose erring steps, if there be tears in heaven, a pious mother looks down and weeps. If he be capable of feeling, he suffers already all that humanity can suffer—suffers, and wherever he may fly, will suffer, with the poignant recollection of having taken the life of one, who was too magnanimous, in return, to attempt his own. Had he known this, it must have paralyzed his arm, while it pointed, at so incorruptible a bosom, the instrument of death. Does he know this now? His heart, if it be not adamant, must soften—if it be not ice, must melt. But on this article I forbear. Stained with blood as he is, if he be penitent, I forgive him—and if he be not, before these altars, where all of us appear as suppliants, I wish not to excite your vengeance, but rather, in behalf of an object, rendered wretched and pitiable by crime, to wake your prayers.

But I have said, and I repeat it, there are those whom I cannot forgive. I cannot forgive that minister

at the altar, who has hitherto forborne to remonstrate on this subject. I cannot forgive that public prosecutor, who, intrusted with the duty of avenging his country's wrongs, has seen those wrongs, and taken no measures to avenge them. I cannot forgive that judge upon the bench, or that governor in the chair of state, who has lightly passed over such offences. I cannot forgive the public, in whose opinion the duelist finds a sanctuary. I cannot forgive you, my brethren, who, till this late hour, have been silent, while successive murders were committed. No; I cannot forgive you, that you have not, in common with the freemen of this state, raised your voice to the powers that be; and loudly and explicitly demanded an execution of your laws; demanded this in a manner, which, if it did not reach the ear of government, would at least have reached the heavens, and plead your excuse before the God that filleth them—in whose presence as I stand, I should not feel myself innocent of the blood that crieth against us, had I been silent. But I have not been silent. Many of you who hear me, are my witnesses—the walls of yonder temple, where I have heretofore addressed you, are my witnesses, how freely I have animadverted on this subject, in the presence both of those who have violated the laws, and of those whose indispensable duty it is to see the laws executed on those who violate them.

I enjoy another opportunity; and would to God, I might be permitted to approach for once the late scene of death. Would to God, I could there assemble, on the one side, the disconsolate mother with her seven fatherless children; and on the other, those who administer the justice of my country. Could I do this, I would point them to these sad objects. I would entreat them, by the agonies of bereaved fondness; to listen to the widow's heartfelt groans; to mark the orphan's sighs and tears. And having done this, I would uncover the breathless corps of Hamilton—I would lift from his gaping wound, his bloody mantle—

I would hold it up to heaven before them, and I would ask, in the name of God, I would ask, whether, at the sight of it, they felt no compunction?

You will ask, perhaps, what can be done, to arrest the progress of a practice which has yet so many advocates? I answer, nothing—if it be the deliberate intention to do nothing. But, if otherwise, much is within our power. Let, then, the governor see that the laws are executed; let the council displace the man who offends against their majesty; let courts of justice frown from their bar, as unworthy to appear before them, the murderer and his accomplices; let the people declare him unworthy of their confidence who engages in such sanguinary contests; let this be done, and should life still be taken in single combat, then the governor, the council, the court, the people, looking up to the Avenger of sin, may say, “we are innocent, we are innocent.” Do you ask, how proof can be obtained? How can it be avoided? The parties return, hold up, before our eyes, the instruments of death, publish to the world the circumstances of their interview, and even, with an air of insulting triumph, boast how coolly and deliberately they proceeded in violating one of the most sacred laws of earth and heaven!

Ah! ye tragic shores of Hoboken, crimsoned with the richest blood, I tremble at the crimes you record against us—the annual register of murders which you keep and send up to God! Place of inhuman cruelty! beyond the limits of reason, of duty and of religion, where man assumes a more barbarous nature, and ceases to be man. What poignant, lingering sorrows do thy lawless combats occasion to surviving relatives! Ye who have hearts of pity—ye who have experienced the anguish of dissolving friendship—who have wept, and still weep, over the mouldering ruins of departed kindred, ye can enter into this reflection.

O thou disconsolate widow! robbed, so cruelly robbed, and in so short a time, both of a husband and a

son, what must be the plenitude of thy sufferings! Could we approach thee, gladly would we drop the tear of sympathy, and pour into thy bleeding bosom the balm of consolation! But how could we comfort her whom God hath not comforted? To His throne, let us lift up our voice and weep. O God! if thou art still the widow's husband, and the father of the fatherless, if in the fulness of thy goodness there be yet mercies in store for miserable mortals, pity, O pity this afflicted mother, and grant that her hapless orphans may find a friend, a benefactor, a father, in Thee! On this article I have done: and may God add his blessing.

But I have still a claim upon your patience. I cannot here repress my feelings, and thus let pass the present opportunity.

"How are the mighty fallen." And, regardless as we are of vulgar deaths, shall not the fall of the mighty affect us? A short time since, and he, who is the occasion of our sorrows, was the ornament of his country. He stood on an eminence, and glory covered him. From that eminence he has fallen—suddenly, forever, fallen. His intercourse with the living world is now ended; and those, who would hereafter find him, must seek him in the grave. There, cold and lifeless, is the heart which just now was the seat of friendship. There, dim and sightless is the eye, whose radiant and enlivening orb beamed with intelligence; and there, closed forever, are those lips, on whose persuasive accents we have so often, and so lately, hung with transport! From the darkness which rests upon his tomb, there proceeds, methinks, a light in which it is clearly seen, that those gaudy objects, which men pursue, are only phantoms. In this light, how dimly shines the splendor of victory; how humble appears the majesty of grandeur! The bubble, which seemed to have so much solidity, has burst; and we again see, that all below the sun is vanity.

True, the funeral eulogy has been pronounced; the

sad and solemn procession has moved; the badge of mourning has already been decreed, and presently the sculptured marble will lift up its front, proud to perpetuate the name of Hamilton, and rehearse to the passing traveller his virtues. Just tributes of respect! And to the living useful. But to him, mouldering in his narrow and humble habitation, what are they? How vain! how unavailing!

Approach, and behold, while I lift from his sepulchre its covering! Ye admirers of his greatness; ye emulous of his talents and his fame, approach, and behold him now. How pale! How silent! No martial bands admire the adroitness of his movements: no fascinated throng weep, and melt, and tremble, at his eloquence! Amazing change! A shroud! a coffin! a narrow, subterraneous cabin! This is all that now remains of Hamilton! And is this all that remains of him? During a life so transitory, what lasting monument, then, can our fondest hopes erect!

My brethren! we stand on the borders of an awful gulf, which is swallowing up all things human. And is there, amidst this universal wreck, nothing stable, nothing abiding, nothing immortal, on which poor, frail, dying man can fasten? Ask the hero, ask the statesman, whose wisdom you have been accustomed to revere, and he will tell you. He will tell you, did I say? He has already told you, from his death-bed, and his illumined spirit, still whispers from the heavens, with well known eloquence, the solemn admonition.

“Mortals! hastening to the tomb, and once the companions of my pilgrimage, take warning and avoid my errors; cultivate the virtues I have recommended; choose the Saviour I have chosen; live disinterestedly; live for immortality; and would you rescue any thing from final dissolution, lay it up in God.”

Thus speaks, methinks, our deceased benefactor, and thus he acted during his last sad hours. To the exclusion of every other concern, religion now claims

all his thoughts, Jesus! Jesus, is now his only hope. The friends of Jesus are his friends; the ministers of the altar his companions. While these intercede, he listens in awful silence, or in profound submission whispers his assent. Sensible, deeply sensible of his sins, he pleads no merit of his own. He repairs to the mercy-seat, and there pours out his penitential sorrows—there he solicits pardon. Heaven, it should seem, heard and pitied the suppliant's cries. Disburdened of his sorrows, and looking up to God, he exclaims, "Grace, rich grace." "I have," said he, clasping his dying hands, and with a faltering tongue, "I have a tender reliance on the mercy of God in Christ." In token of this reliance, and as an expression of his faith, he receives the holy sacrament; and having done this, his mind becomes tranquil and serene. Thus he remains, thoughtful indeed, but unruffled to the last, and meets death with an air of dignified composure, and with an eye directed to the heavens.

- This last act, more than any other, sheds glory on his character. Every thing else death effaces. Religion alone abides with him on his death-bed. He dies a Christian. This is all which can be enrolled of him among the archives of eternity. This is all that can make his name great in heaven. Let not the sneering infidel persuade you that this last act of homage to the Saviour, resulted from an enfeebled state of mental faculties, or from perturbation occasioned by the near approach of death. No; his opinions concerning the divine mission of Jesus Christ, and the validity of the holy scriptures, had long been settled, and settled after laborious investigation and extensive and deep research. These opinions were not concealed. I knew them myself. Some of you, who hear me, knew them; and had his life been spared, it was his determination to have published them to the world, together with the facts and reasons on which they were founded.

At a time when scepticism, shallow and superficial indeed, but depraved and malignant, is breathing forth its pestilential vapor, and polluting, by its unhallowed touch, every thing divine and sacred; it is consoling to a devout mind to reflect, that the great and the wise, and the good of all ages, those superior geniuses, whose splendid talents have elevated them almost above mortality, and placed them next in order to angelic natures—yes, it is consoling to a devout mind to reflect, that while dwarfish infidelity lifts up its deformed head, and mocks, these illustrious personages, though living in different ages, inhabiting different countries, nurtured in different schools, destined to different pursuits, and differing on various subjects, should all, as if touched with an impulse from heaven, agree to vindicate the sacredness of Revelation, and present with one accord, their learning, their talents and their virtue, on the gospel altar, as an offering to Emanuel.

This is not exaggeration. Who was it, that, over-leaping the narrow bounds which had hitherto been set to the human mind, ranged abroad through the immensity of space, discovered and illustrated those laws by which the Deity unites, binds and governs all things? Who was it, soaring into the sublime of astronomical science, numbered the stars of heaven, measured their spheres, and called them by their names? It was Newton. But Newton was a Christian. Newton, great as he was, received instruction from the lips, and laid his honors at the feet of Jesus. Who was it that developed the hidden combination, the component parts of bodies? Who was it, dissected the animal, examined the flower, penetrated the earth, and ranged the extent of organic nature? It was Boyle. But Boyle was a Christian. Who was it, that lifted the veil which had for ages covered the intellectual world, analyzed the human mind, defined its powers, and reduced its operations to certain and fixed laws? It was Locke. But Locke too was a Christian.

What more shall I say? For time would fail me, to speak of Hale, learned in the law; of Addison, admired in the schools; of Milton, celebrated among the poets; and of Washington, immortal in the field and the cabinet. To this catalogue of professing Christians, from among, if I may speak so, a higher order of beings, may now be added the name of Alexander Hamilton—a name which raises in the mind the idea of whatever is great, whatever is splendid, whatever is illustrious in human nature; and which is now added to a catalogue which might be lengthened—and lengthened—and lengthened, with the names of illustrious characters, whose lives have blessed society, and whose works form a column high as heaven; a column of learning, of wisdom, and of greatness, which will stand to future ages, an eternal monument of the transcendent talents of the advocates of Christianity, when every fugitive leaf, from the pen of the canting infidel witlings of the day, shall be swept by the tide of time from the annals of the world, and buried with the names of their authors in oblivion.

To conclude. “How are the mighty fallen!” Fallen before the desolating hand of death. Alas! the ruins of the tomb! The ruins of the tomb are an emblem of the ruins of the world; when not an individual, but a universe, already marred by sin and hastening to dissolution, shall agonize and die! Directing your thoughts from the one, fix them for a moment on the other. Anticipate the concluding scene, the final catastrophe of nature: when the sign of the Son of man shall be seen in heaven; when the Son of man himself shall appear in the glory of his Father, and send forth judgment unto victory. The fiery desolation envelopes towns, palaces and fortresses; the heavens pass away! the earth melts! and all those magnificent productions of art, which ages, heaped on ages, have reared up, are in one awful day reduced to ashes.

Against the ruins of that day, as well as the ruins of the tomb which precede it, the gospel, in the cross of its

great High Priest, offers you all a sanctuary; a sanctuary secure and abiding; a sanctuary, which no lapse of time, nor change of circumstances, can destroy. No; neither life nor death. No; neither principalities nor powers.

Every thing else is fugitive; every thing else is mutable; every thing else will fail you. But this, the citadel of the Christian's hopes, will never fail you. Its base is adamant. It is cemented with the richest blood. The ransomed of the Lord crowd its portals. Embosomed in the dust which it encloses, the bodies of the redeemed "rest in hope." On its top dwells the Church of the first born, who in delightful response with the angels of light, chant redeeming love. Against this citadel the tempest beats, and around it the storm rages, and spends its force in vain. Immortal in its nature, and incapable of change, it stands, and stands firm, amidst the ruins of a mouldering world, and endures forever.

Thither fly, ye prisoners of hope!—that when earth, air, elements, shall have passed away, secure of existence and felicity, you may join with saints in glory, to perpetuate the song which lingered on the faltering tongue of Hamilton, "Grace—rich Grace."

God grant us this honor. Then shall the measure of our joy be full, and to his name shall be the glory in Christ.

AN ORATION.

DELIVERED

BY RICHARD RUSH,

ON THE 4TH OF JULY, 1812, IN THE HALL OF THE HOUSE
OF REPRESENTATIVES, AT WASHINGTON: AT THE RE-
QUEST OF THE COMMITTEE OF ARRANGEMENT FOR THE
CELEBRATION OF THAT DAY.



SENSIBLY as I feel, fellow-citizens, the honor of having been selected to address you on such an occasion as this, I am not less sensible of the difficulties of the task. Not that there is any thing intrinsically arduous in a celebration, in this form, of the most brilliant political anniversary of the world; but as the subject has been repeatedly exhibited, under so many points of view, I am apprehensive of tiring, without being able to requite, the attention with which you may be good enough to honor my endeavors. The fruitful subject must still sustain me, and I proceed with unfeigned diffidence, and the most profound respect for this distinguished and enlightened assembly, to perform the office assigned me.*

During each return of this day for nearly thirty successive years, our country rested in all the security and all the blessings of peace. But the scene and the aspect are changed. The menacing front of war is before us, to awaken our solitudes, to demand at the hands of each citizen of the republic the most active energies

* The President of the United States, Heads of Department, members of Congress, &c., as well as citizens and strangers, were present at the delivery of this discourse.

of duty; to ask, if need be, the largest sacrifices of advantage and of ease. The tranquillity, the enjoyments, the hopes of peace, are, for a while, at an end. These, with their endearing concomitants, are to give place to the stronger and more agitating passions, to the busy engagements, to the solemn and anxious thoughts, to the trials, to the sufferings, that follow in the train of war.

Man, in his individual nature, becomes virtuous by constant struggles against his own imperfections. His intellectual eminence, which puts him at the head of created beings, is attained also by long toil, and painful self-denials, bringing with them, but too often, despondence to his mind, and hazards to his frame. It would seem to be a law of his existence, that great enjoyment is only to be obtained as the reward of great exertion. "She shall go to a wealthy place," but her way shall be "through fire and through water." It seems the irreversible lot of nations, that their permanent well-being is to be achieved also through severe probations. Their origin is often in agony and blood, and their safety to be maintained only by constant vigilance, by arduous efforts, by a willingness to encounter danger and by actually and frequently braving it. Their prosperity, their rights, their liberties, are, alas, scarcely otherwise to be placed upon a secure and durable basis! It is in vain that the precepts of the moralist, or the maxims of a sublimated reason, are levelled at the inutility, if not the criminality of wars; in vain that eloquence portrays, that humanity deplores the misery which they inflict. If the wishes of the philanthropist could be realized, then, indeed, happily for us, happily for the whole human race, they would be banished forever from the world. But while selfishness, ambition, and the lust of plunder, continue to infest the bosoms of the rulers of nations, wars will take place, they always have taken place, and the nation that shall, at this day, hope to shelter itself by standing, in practice, on their abstract impropriety, must expect to

see its very foundations assailed ; assailed by cunning and artifice, or by the burst and fury of those fierce, ungoverned passions, which its utmost forbearance would not be able to deprecate or appease. It would assuredly fall, and with fatal speed, the victim of its own impracticable virtue.

Thirty years, fellow-citizens, is a long time to have been exempt from the calamities of war. Few nations of the world, in any age, have enjoyed so long an exemption. It is a fact that affords, in itself, the most honorable and incontestible proof, that those who have guided the destinies of this, have ardently cherished peace ; for, it is impossible, but that during the lapse of such a period, abundant provocation must have presented, had not our government and people been slow to wrath, and almost predetermined against wars. It is a lamentable truth, that during the whole of this period we have been the subjects of unjust treatment at the hands of other nations, and that the constancy of our own forbearance has been followed up by the constant infliction of wrongs upon ourselves. When, let us ask with exultation, when have ambassadors from other countries been sent to our shores to complain of injuries done by the American states ? What nation have the American states plundered ? What nation have the American states outraged ? Upon what rights have the American states trampled ? In the pride of justice and of true honor, we answer none ; but we have sent forth from ourselves the messengers of peace and conciliation, again and again, across seas, and to distant countries ; to ask, earnestly to sue, for a cessation of the injuries done to us. They have gone charged with our well founded complaints, to deprecate the longer practice of unfriendly treatment ; to protest, under the sensibility of real suffering, against that course which made the persons and the property of our countrymen the subjects of rude seizure and rapacious spoliation. These have been the ends they were sent to obtain ; ends too fair for protracted

refusals, too intelligible to have been entangled in evasive subtleties, too legitimate to have been neglected in hostile silence. When their ministers have been sent to us, what has been the aim of their missions? To urge redress for wrongs done to them, shall we again ask? No, the melancholy reverse! for in too many instances they have come to excuse, to palliate, or even to endeavor, in some shape, to rivet those, inflicted by their own sovereigns upon us.

Perhaps the annals of no nation, of the undoubted resources of this, afford a similar instance of encroachments upon its essential rights, for so long a time, without some exertion of the public force to check or to prevent them. The entire amount of property of which, during a space of about twenty years, our citizens have been plundered by the belligerent powers of Europe, would form, could it be ascertained, a curious and perhaps novel record of persevering injustice on the part of nations professing to be at peace. Unless recollection be awakened into effort, we are not ourselves sensible, and it requires at this day some effort to make us so, of the number and magnitude of the injuries that have been heaped upon us. They teach in pathology, that the most violent impressions lose the power of exciting sensation, when applied gradually and continued for a long time. This has been strikingly true in its application to ourselves as a nation. The aggressions, we have received, have made a regular, and the most copious part of our national occurrences, and stand incorporated, under an aspect more prominent than any other, with our annual history. Our state papers have scarcely, since the present government began, touched any other subject; and our statute book will be found to record as well the aggressions themselves as peaceful attempts at their removal, in various fruitless acts of legislative interposition. It may strike, even the best informed, with a momentary surprise when it is mentioned, that for eighteen successive years the official communication

from the head of the executive government to both Houses of Congress, at the opening of the annual sessions, has embraced a reference to some well ascertained infringement of our rights as an independent state ! Where is the parallel of this in the history of any nation holding any other than a rank of permanent weakness or inferiority ? As subsequent and superior misfortunes expel the remembrance of those which have gone before, so distinct injuries as we have progressively received them, have continued to engross for their day, our never tiring remonstrances.

Still, it may be said, we have been prosperous and happy ! So we have relatively. But we have, assuredly, been abridged of our full and rightful measure of prosperity. Of a nation composed of millions, calamitous, indeed, beyond example, would be its lot, if, in its early stages, the domestic condition of all, or the chief part of its inhabitants was, in any sensible degree, touched with misery or overwhelmed with ruin. This marks the fall of nations. It is not the way in which national misfortunes and an untoward national fate begin to operate. We protest against the principle which inculcates constant submission to wrongs. To ourselves, to our posterity, this is alike due. With what palliation would it be replied to the plunder of a rich man, that enough was left for his comfortable subsistence ? If our ships are taken, is it sufficient that our houses are left ; if our mariners are seized, is it a boon that our farmers, our mechanics, our laborers are spared ; that those who sit behind the barriers of affluence are safe ? To what ultimate dangers would not so partial an estimate of the protecting duty open the way ? Happily, we trust, the nation, on a scale of more enlarged equity and wiser forecast, has judged and has willed differently. Having essayed its utmost to avert its wrongs by peaceful means, it has determined on appealing to the sword, not on the ground of immediate pressure alone, but on the still higher one that longer submission to them holds out a pros-

pect of permanent evil, a prospect rendered certain by the experience we have ourselves acquired, that forbearance for more than twenty years has not only invited a repetition, but an augmentation of trespasses, increasing in bitterness as well as number, increasing in the most flagrant prostrations of justice, presumptuously avowed at length to be devoid of all pretext of moral right, and promulgated as the foundation of a system intended to be as permanent as its elements are depraved.

It is cause of the deepest regret, fellow-citizens, that while we are about to enter upon a conflict with one nation, our multiplied and heavy causes of complaint against another should remain unredressed. It adds to this regret, that, although a last attempt is still depending, the past injustice of the latter nation, wanting also in rapacity, leaves but the feeblest hope of their satisfactory and peaceful adjustment.

Some there are, who shrink back at the idea of war with Britain! War with the nation from which we sprung, and where still sleep the ashes of our ancestors; whose history is our history, whose firesides are our firesides, whose illustrious names are our boast, whose glory should be our glory! Yes, we feel these truths! We reject the poor definition of country which would limit it to an occupancy of the same little piece of earth! A common stock of ancestry, a kindred face and blood, the links that grow upon a thousand moral and domestic sympathies should indeed reach further, and might once have been made to defy the intermediate roll of an ocean to sunder them apart.

But, who was it that first broke these ties? who was it that first forgot, that put to scorn such generous ties? Let their own historians, their own orators answer. Hear the language of a member of the British house of commons, in the year 1765: "They children planted by your care! No! your oppression planted them in America. They fled from your tyranny

into an uncultivated land, where they were exposed to all the hardships to which human nature is liable; to the savage cruelty of the enemy of the wilderness, a people the most subtle and the most formidable upon the face of the earth: and yet they met all these hardships with pleasure, compared with those they suffered in their own country, where they should have been treated as friends. They nourished by your indulgence? No, they grew by your neglect. When you began to care about them, that care was exercised in sending persons to rule over them, who were the deputies of some deputy, sent to spy out their liberty, to misrepresent their actions, to prey upon their substance; men whose behaviour has caused the blood of those sons of liberty to recoil within them. They protected by your arms? They have nobly taken up arms in your defence; have exerted their valor, amidst their constant and laborious industry, for the defence of a country the interior of which has yielded all its little savings to your enlargement, while its frontier was drenched in blood."* Yes, who was it we ask, first tore such generous sympathies? Let the blood of Concord and of Lexington again answer! Our whole country converted into a field of battle, the bayonet thrust at our bosoms! and for what? for asking only the privileges of Britons; while they claimed "to bind us in all cases whatsoever." Against all that history teaches, will they charge upon us the crime of rending these ties? They compelled us into a rejection of them all—a rejection to which we were long loth—by their constant exercise of unjust power; by laying upon us the hand of sharp, systematic oppression; by attacking us with fierce vengeance. With the respect, due from faithful

* So actively did the American colonies co-operate with Great Britain, in the memorable seven years' war, to which this speech of Colonel Barre alludes, that they are said to have lost nearly thirty thousand of their young men. See Marshall's *Life of Washington*. vol. 3, p. 85.

subjects, but with the dignity of freemen, did we, with long patience, petition, supplicate, for a removal of our wrongs, new oppressions, insults and hostile troops were our answers!

When Britain shall pass from the stage of nations, it will be, indeed, with her glory, but it will also be with her shame. And, with shame, will her annals in nothing more be loaded than in this. That while in the actual possession of much relative freedom at home, it has been her uniform characteristic to let fall upon the remote subjects of her own empire, an iron hand of harsh and vindictive power. If, as is alleged in her eulogy, to touch her soil proclaims emancipation to the slave, it is more true, that when her sceptre reaches over that confined limit, it thenceforth, and as it menacingly waves throughout the globe, inverts the rule that would give to her soil this purifying virtue. Witness Scotland, towards whom her treatment, until the union in the last century, was marked, during the longest periods, by perfidious injustice or by rude force, circumventing her liberties, or striving to cut them down with the sword. Witness Ireland, who for five centuries has bled, who, to the present hour, continues to bleed, under the yoke of her galling supremacy; whose miserable victims seem at length to have laid down, subdued and despairing, under the multiplied inflictions of her cruelty and rigor. In vain do her own best statesmen and patriots remonstrate against this unjust career! in vain put forth the annual efforts of their benevolence, their zeal, their eloquence; in vain touch every spring that interest, that humanity, that the maxims of everlasting justice can move, to stay its force and mitigate the fate of Irishmen. Alas, for the persecuted adherents of the cross she leaves no hope! Witness her subject millions in the east, where, in the descriptive language of the greatest of her surviving orators, "sacrilege, massacre and perfidy pile up the sombre pyramids of her renown."

But, all these instances are of her fellow-men of merely co-equal, perhaps unknown descent and blood; co-existing from all time with herself, and making up, only accidentally, a part of her dominion. We ought to have been spared. The otherwise undistinguishing rigor of this outstretched sceptre might still have spared us. We were descended from her own loins: bone of her bone and flesh of her flesh; not so much a part of her empire as a part of herself—her very self. Towards her own it might have been expected she would relent. When she invaded our homes, she saw her own countenance, heard her own voice, beheld her own altars! Where was then that pure spirit which she now would tell us sustains her amidst self-sacrifices, in her generous contest for the liberties of other nations? If it flowed in her nature, here it might have delighted to beam out; here was space for its saving love: the true mother chastens, not destroys the child: but Britain, when she struck at us, struck at her own image, struck too at the immortal principles which her Lockes, her Miltons, and her Sidneys taught, and the fell blow severed us forever, as a kindred nation! The crime is purely her own; and upon her, not us, be its consequences and its stain.

In looking at Britain, with eyes less prepossessed than we are apt to have from the circumstance of our ancient connexion with her, we should see, indeed, her common lot of excellence, on which to found esteem; but it would lift the covering from deformities which may well startle and repel. A harshness of individual character, in the general view of it, which is perceived and acknowledged by all Europe; a spirit of unbecoming censure, as regards all customs and institutions not their own; a ferocity in some of their characteristics of national manners, pervading their very pastimes, which no other modern people are endowed with the blunted sensibility to bear: a universally self-assumed superiority, not innocently manifesting itself in speculative sentiments among themselves,

but unamiably indulged when with foreigners of whatever description in their own country, or when they themselves are the temporary sojourners in a foreign country; a code of criminal law that forgets to feel for human frailty, that sports with human misfortune, that has shed more blood in deliberate judicial severity for two centuries past—constantly increasing too in its sanguinary hue—than has ever been sanctioned by the jurisprudence of any ancient or modern nation, civilized and refined like herself; the merciless whippings in her army, peculiar to herself alone; the conspicuous commission and freest acknowledgment of vice in her upper classes; the overweening distinctions shown to opulence and birth, so destructive of a sound moral sentiment in the nation, so baffling to virtue. These are some of the traits that rise up to a contemplation of the inhabitants of this isle, and are adverted to, with an admission of qualities that may spring up as the correlatives of some of them, under the remark of our being prone to overlook the vicious ingredients, while we so readily praise the good that belongs to her.

How should it fall out, that this nation, more than any other that is ambitious and warlike, should be free from the dispositions that lead to injustice, violence and plunder; and what rules of prudence should check our watchfulness or allay our fears, in regard to the plans her conduct is the best illustration of her having so steadily meditated towards us? Why not be girded as regards her attacks, wary as regards her intrigues, alarmed as regards her habit of devastation and long indulged appetite of blood? Look at the marine of Britain, its vast, its tremendous extent! What potentate upon the earth wields a power that is to be compared with it? What potentate upon the earth can move an apparatus of destruction so without rival, so little liable to any counteraction? The world, in no age, has seen its equal. It marks a new era in the history of human force: an instrument of

power and of ambition, with no limits to its rapid and hideous workings but the waters and the winds. Why should she impiously suppose the ocean to be her own element? Why should she claim the right to give law to it, any more than the eagle the exclusive right to fly in the air? If ever there was a power formidable to the liberties of other states, particularly those afar off, is it not this? If ever there was a power which other states should feel warned to behold with fearful jealousy, and anxious to see broken up, is it not this? The opinion inculcated by her own interested politicians and journalists, that such a force is designed to be employed only to mediate for the rights of other nations, can hold no sway before the unshackled reflections of a dispassionate mind. All experience, all knowledge of man, explode the supposition. So, more particularly, does the very growth and history of this extraordinary power itself. It has swelled to its gigantic size, not through any concurrence of fortuitous or temporary causes, but through long continued and the most systematic national views. It was in the time of her early Edwards, that she first began arrogantly to exact a ceremonious obeisance from the flags of other nations, since which, the entire spirit of her navigation laws, her commercial usages, her treaties, have steadily looked to the establishment of an overruling marine. This is the theme from which her poets insult the world by singing, "Britannia's is the sea, and not a flag but by permission waves." It is the great instrument of annoyance in the hands of her ministers, with which they threaten, or which they wield, to confirm allies, to alarm foes, to make other states tributary to their manufacturing, their commercial or their warlike schemes. Even the multitude in their streets, their boys, the halt and the blind, learn it in the ballads, and at every carousal, "Rule Britannia" is the loud acclamation, the triumphant echo of the scene! The end so long pursued with a constant view to unlimited

empire throughout that element which covers two thirds of the globe, has been obtained, and Britain finds herself, at this era, the dreaded mistress of the seas! With what rapacious sway she has begun to put forth this arm of her supremacy, we, fellow-citizens, have experienced, while the flames of Copenhagen have lighted it up to Europe in characters of a more awful glare.

When the late Colonel Henry Laurens left England, in the year 1774, he had previously waited on the Earl of Hillsborough, in order to converse with him on American affairs. In the course of conversation Colonel Laurens said, the duty of three pence a pound on tea, and all the other taxes, were not worth the expense of a war. "You mistake the cause of our controversy with your country," said his lordship: "You spread too much canvass upon the ocean; do you think we will let you go on with your navigation, and your forty thousand seamen?"* The same hostile spirit to our growing commerce has actuated every minister, and every privy council, and every parliament of Great Britain since that time; and it is the spirit she manifests towards other nations. The recent declarations, made upon the floor of the House of Commons in debate upon the orders in council, add a new corroboration to the proofs that this monopolizing spirit has been one of the steady maxims designed to secure and uphold her absolute dominion upon the waves. But to that Being who made the waters and the winds for the common use of his creatures, do we owe it never to forego our equal claim to their immunities.

In entering upon a war it is our chief consolation—that will give dignity to the contest and confidence to our hearts; to know that before God and before the world, our cause is just. To dilate on this head, although so fruitful, would swell to undue limits this ad-

* The writer derived this anecdote through one of our principal statesmen who has been abroad.

dress, and betray a forgetfulness of the informed and anticipating understandings of this assembly. Our provocation consists of multiplied wrongs, of the most numerous injuries, of the most aggravated insults. They have been fully placed before the world in the recent authentic declarations of our government. In these declarations will be read the solemn justification of what we have done, and our posterity will cling to them as a manly, yet pure and unblemished portion of their inheritance. In the language of one of them flowing from the highest and the purest source, founded on authentic history, and which exhibits a state paper alike distinguished by its profound reasoning, its elevated justice, and its impressive dignity, we have "beheld, in fine, on the side of Great Britain a state of war against the United States; and, on the side of the United States, a state of peace towards Great Britain." It is the same pen,* too, which has been officially employed for so many years in combatting our wrongs and striving for their pacific redress, with a constant and sublime adherence to the maxims of universal equity as well as of public law, which now solemnly declares our actual situation. Can Americans then hesitate what part to act? Whither would have fled the remembrance of their character and deeds? Whither soon would flee their rights, their liberties? Where would be the spirits, where the courage, of their slain fathers? Snatched and gone from ignoble sons! What should we answer to the children we leave behind, who will take their praise or their reproach, from the conduct of their sires—and those sires republicans! Who, rejecting from the train of their succession the perishing honors of a riband or a badge, are more nobly inspired to transmit the unfading distinctions that spring from the resolute discharge of all the patriot's high duties! Why should we stay our arm against Britain while she wars upon us; are we

* Mr. Madison's—then President of the United States.

appalled at her legions; do we shrink back at her vengeance? No, fellow-citizens, no! we have faced those legions, braved and triumphed over that vengeance. Powerful as she is, old in arms and in discipline, upon the plains of America has she once learned that her ranks can be subdued and her high ensign fall. Not in a boastful, but in a temper to encourage, would we speak it, British valor has yielded to the equal, spontaneous valor, but the more indignant fire which freedom and a just cause could impart, when opposed to the hired forces of an unjust king. And is there less to inspire now? Let a few short reflections determine.

While I abstain from any enumeration of the other encroachments of Great Britain upon us as an independent nation, through their successive accumulations until they have ended in making the whole trade of our country in substance and in terms colonial, suffering it to exist, and to exist only, where it subserves her own absorbing avarice, or what she calls her retaliating vengeance, I must nevertheless solicit your indulgence to pause with me; for a little while, upon a single wrong.

The seizure of the persons of American citizens under the name and the pretexts of impressment, by the naval officers of Great Britain, is an outrage of that kind which makes it difficult to speak of it in terms of appropriate description; for this, among other reasons, that the offence itself is new. It is probable that the most careful researches into history, where indeed of almost every form of rapine between men and between nations is to be found the melancholy record, will yet afford no example of the systematic perpetration of an offence of a similar nature, perpetrated, too, under a claim of right. To take a just and no other than a serious illustration, the only parallel to it is to be found in the African slave trade; and if an eminent statesman of England once spoke of the latter, as the greatest practical evil that had ever afflicted mankind, we

may be allowed to denominate the former the greatest practical offence that has ever been offered to a civilized and independent state. With the American government it has been a question of no party or of no day. At every period of its administration, the odious practice has been constantly protested against, and its discontinuance been demanded under every form of pacific remonstrance. With all our statesmen, while engaged in exercising the public authorities of the nation, it has been deemed, if not otherwise to have been abrogated, legitimate cause of war. The only imaginable difference among any of them, has been, as to the time when it would be proper to use this imperious resort; as if the time was not always at hand for a nation to redeem such a stain upon its vitals, and as if an encroachment of this nature does not become the more difficult to beat back with each year, and with each instance, in which it is permitted. But it best accorded with the genius of our government, with its love of peace, and perhaps with what was due to peace, to attempt at first its pacific removal. General Washington, when at the head of the government, is known to have viewed it with the sensibility that such an indignity could not fail to arouse in his bosom, and had he lived until this day to see it not only unredressed and unmitigated, but increased, amidst all the amicable efforts on our part for its cessation, there is the strongest reason for supposing that his just estimate of the nation's welfare, that his lofty and gallant spirit, would have stood forth, had it been but the single grievance, the manly advocate for its extirpation by the sword. But if our submission to it so long has incurred a just reproach, happily it is in some measure assuaged in the reflection that our forbearance will serve to put us more completely in the right at this eventful period.

That our enemy has invariably refused to accede to such terms as were answerable to the indispensable expectations of our own government, as the organ of a

sovereign people, upon this head, is a point susceptible of entire proof. Avoiding other particulars, it will be sufficient to introduce a single one. It is a fact, which the archives of our public departments will show, that in order to take from Great Britain the remnant of her own excuses for seizing our men under the pretext, at all times disallowable, of invading the sanctuary of our ships in search of her own, it was proposed to her, that the United States would forbear to receive her seamen on board of their vessels, provided she, in her turn, would abstain from receiving our men on board of hers. This would wholly have destroyed the insulting claim, set up by her, to break in with armed men upon our vessels while peaceably sailing on the ocean under color of forcibly taking her own mariners ; - for, the regulation, if adopted, would have given the previous assurance that her own were not there to be found. But this proposal, it is also a fact, she declined. As rapacious of men, as greedy of riches and grasping at dominion, she neglected to avail herself of a regulation that would curtail her in this new species of plunder ; this plunder in the flesh and blood of freemen, of which she has afforded the first example, in all time, to the eyes of an insulted world. But it forcibly marks the devouring ambition of her naval spirit ; and that if public law is ridiculed, justice scoffed at, sovereignty prostrated, and humanity made to shudder and to groan ; still, her ships must have men.

Under a mere personal view of this outrage, and considering it on the footing of a moral sin, it is strictly like the African slave trade. Like that it breaks up families and causes hearts to bleed. Like that it tears the son from the father, the father from the son. Like that it makes orphans and widows, takes the brother from the sister, seizes up the young man in the health of his days and blasts his hopes forever. It is worse than the slavery of the African, for the African is only made to work under the lash of a task-master, whereas the citizen of the United States, thus enslaved, receives

also the lash on the slightest lapses from a rigorous discipline, and is moreover exposed to the bitter fate of fighting against those towards whom he has no hostility, perhaps his own countrymen, it may be, his own immediate kindred. This is not exaggeration, fellow-citizens, it is reality and fact.

But, say the British, we want not your men; we want only our own. Prove that they are yours and we will surrender them up. Baser outrage! insolent indignity! that a free born American must be made to prove his nativity to those who have previously violated his liberty, else he is to be held forever as a slave! That before a British tribunal, a British boarding officer, a free born American must be made to seal up the vouchers of his lineage, to exhibit the records of his baptism and his birth, to establish the identity that binds him to his parents, to his blood, to his native land, by setting forth in odious detail his size, his age, the shape of his frame, whether his hair is long or cropt, his marks, like an ox or a horse of the manger; that all this must be done as the condition of his escape from the galling thralldom of a British ship! Can we hear it, can we think of it, with any other than indignant feelings at our tarnished name and nation? And suppose through this degrading process his deliverance to be effected, where is he to seek redress for the intermediate wrong? The unauthorized seizure and detention of any piece of property, a mere trespass upon goods, will always lay the foundation for some, often the heaviest retribution, in every well regulated society. But to whom, or where, shall our imprisoned citizen, when the privilege of shaking off his fetters has at last been accorded to him, turn for his redress? where look to reimburse the stripes, perhaps the wounds he has received; his worn spirit, his long inward agonies? No, the public code of nations recognizes not the penalty, for to the modern rapaciousness of Britain it was reserved to add to the dark catalogue of human sufferings this flagitious crime.

But why be told that, even on such proofs, our citizens will be released from their captivity? We have long and sorely experienced the impracticable nature of this boon which, in the imagined relaxation of her deep injustice, she would affect to hold out. Go to the office of the department of state, within sight of where we are assembled, and there see the piles of certificates and documents, of affidavits, records and seals, anxiously drawn out and folded up, to show why Americans should not be held as slaves, and see how they rest, and will forever rest, in hopeless neglect upon the shelves! Some defect in form, some impossibility of filling up all the crevices which British exaction insists upon being closed; the uncertainty, if, after all, they will ever reach their point of destination, the climate or the sea where the hopes of gain or the lust of conquest are impelling, through constant changes, their ships; the probability that the miserable individual, to whom they are intended as the harbinger of liberation from his shackles, may have been translated from the first scene of his incarceration to another, from a seventyfour to a sixtyfour, from a sixtyfour to a frigate, and thus through rapid, if not designed mutations, a practice which is known to exist; these are obvious causes of discouragement, by making the issue at all times doubtful, most frequently hopeless. And this Great Britain cannot but know. She does know it, and, with deliberate mockery, in the composure with which bloated power can scoff at submissive and humble suffering, has she continued to increase and protract our humiliation as well as our suffering, by renewals of the visionary offer.

Again it is said, that our citizens resemble their men, look like them in their persons, speak the same language, that discriminations are difficult or impracticable, and therefore it is they are unavoidably seized. Most insulting excuse! And will they impeach that God who equally made us both, who forms our features, moulds our statures and stamps us with a

countenance that turns up to his goodness in adoration and love? Impious as well as insulting! The leopard cannot change his spots or the Ethiopian his skin, but we, we, are to put off our bodies and become unlike ourselves as the price of our safety! Why should similarity of face yoke us exclusively with an ignominious burden? Why, because we were once descended from them, should we be made at this day, and forever, to clank chains? Suppose one of their subjects landed upon our shores—let us suppose him a prince of their blood—shall we seize upon him to mend our highways, shall we draft him for our ranks? Shall we subject him in an instant to all the civil burdens of duty, of taxation, of every species of aid and service that grow out of the allegiance of the citizen, until he can send across the ocean for the registers of his family and birth? What has her foul spirit of impressment to answer to this? Why not equally demand on our part, that every one of her factors, who lands upon our soil, should bring a protection in his pocket, or hang one round his neck, as the price of his safety? If this plea of monstrous outrage be, only for one instant, admitted, remember, fellow-citizens, that it becomes as lasting as monstrous. If our children, and our children's children, and their children, continue to speak the same tongue, to hold the same port with their fathers, they also will be liable to this enslavement, and the groaning evil be co-existent with British power, British rapacity, and the maxim, that the British navy must have men! If our men are like theirs, it should form, to any other than a nation callous to justice, dead to the moral sense, and deliberately bent upon plunder, the very reason why they should give up the practice, seeing that it is intrinsically liable to these mistakes, and that the exercise of what they call a right on their part necessarily brings with it the most high-handed wrongs to us.

I am a Roman citizen, I am a Roman citizen! was an exclamation that insured safety, commanded re-

spect, or inspired terror, in all parts of the world. And although the mild temper of our government exacts not all these attributes, we may, at least, be suffered to deplore with hearts of agony and shame, that while the inhabitants of every other part of the globe enjoy an immunity from the seizure of their persons, except under the fate of war, or by acknowledged pirates—even the wretched Africans of late—to be an American citizen has, for five and twenty years, been the signal for insult and the passport to captivity. Let it not be replied, that the men, they take from us, are sometimes not of a character or description to attract the concern or interposition of the government. If they were all so, it lessens in nowise the enormity of the outrage. It adds, indeed, a fresh indignity to mention it. The sublime equality of justice recognizes no such distinctions, and a government, founded upon the great basis of equal right, would forget one of its fundamental duties, if in the exercise of its protecting power it admits to a foreign nation the least distinction between what it owes to the lowest and meanest, and the highest and most exalted of its citizens.

Sometimes it is said that but few of our seamen are in reality seized! Progressive and foul aggravation! to admit the crime to our faces and seek to screen its atrocity under its limited extent. Whence but from a source hardened with long rapine, could such a palliation flow? It is false. The files of that same department, its melancholy memorials, attest that there are thousands of our countrymen at this moment in slavery in their ships. And if there were but one hundred, if there were but fifty, if there were but ten, if there were but one—how dare they insult a sovereign nation with such an answer? Shall I state to you a fact, fellow-citizens, that will be sufficient to rouse not simply your indignation, but your horror, and would that I could speak it at this moment to the whole nation, that every American, who has a heart to be inflamed with honest resentment, might hear; a fact that shows all

the excess of shame that should flush our faces at submission to an outrage so foul. I state to you upon the highest and most unquestionable authority, that two of the nephews of your immortal Washington have been seized, dragged, made slaves of on board of a British ship! Will it be credited? It is nevertheless true. They were kept in slavery more than a year, and as the transactions of your government will show, were restored to liberty only a few months since.* How, Americans, can you sit down under such indignities? To which of their princes, which of their nobles, to which of their ministers, or which of their regents, will you allow, in the just pride of men and of free-men, that those who stand in consanguinity to the illustrious founder of your liberties, are second in all their claims to safety and protection? But we must leave the odious subject. It swells, indeed, with ever fruitful expansion, to the indignant view, but while it animates it is loathsome. If the English say it is merely an abuse incident to a right on their part, besides denying forever the foundation of such right where it goes to the presumptuous entry of our own vessels with their armed men, shall we tolerate its exercise for an instant when manifestly attended with such a practical, unceasing, and enormous oppression upon ourselves?

This crime of impressment may justly be considered—posterity will so consider it—as transcending the amount of all the other wrongs we have received. Notwithstanding the millions which the cupidity of Britain has wrested from us, the millions which the cupidity of France has wrested from us, including her wicked burnings of our ships; adding also the wrongs from Spain and Denmark; the sum of all should be estimated below this enormity. Ships and merchandize belong to individuals, and may be valued; may

* They were the sons of the late Fielding Lewis, of Virginia, who was immediate nephew to General Washington, for all which see the papers on file in the office of the Secretary of State.

be endured as subjects of negotiation. But men are the property of the nation. In every American face a part of our country's sovereignty is written. It is the living emblem; a thousand times more sacred than the nation's flag itself; of its character, its independence and its rights; its quick and most dearly cherished *insignium*—towards which the nation should ever demand the most scrupulous and inviolable immunity. Man was created in his Maker's own image—"in the image of God created he him." When he is made a slave, where shall there be reimbursement? No, fellow-citizens, under the assistance and protection of the Most High, the evil must be stopped. His own image must not be enslaved. It was deservedly the first enumerated of our grievances in the late solemn message from the first magistrate of our land; on the eighteenth of June of this memorable year we appealed to the sword and to heaven against it, and we shall be wanting to ourselves, to our posterity; we shall never stand erect in our sovereignty as a nation if we return it to the scabbard until such an infamy and curse are removed. The blessings of peace itself become a curse, a foul curse, while such a stain is permitted to rest upon our annals. Never, henceforth, must American ships be converted into worse than butchers' shambles for the inspection and seizure of human flesh! We would appeal to the justice and humanity of their own statesmen, claim the interference of their Wilberforces; invoke the spirit of their departed Fox; call upon all among them, who nobly succeeded in their long struggles against the African slave trade, to stand up and retrieve the British name from the equal odium of this offence.

If it be true that injuries, long acquiesced in, lose the power of exciting sensibility, it may be remarked, in conclusion of this hateful subject, how forcibly verified it is in the instance of robbing us of our citizens. When it happens that some of them are surrendered up, on examination and allowance of the proofs, it is

not unusual to advert to it as an indication of the justice and generosity of the British! The very act, which, to an abstract judgment, should be taken as stamping a seal upon the outrage, by the acknowledgment it implies from themselves of the atrocity, because the unlawfulness of the seizure, is thus converted into a medium of homage and of praise! Inverted patriotism! drooping, downcast, honor! to derive a pleasurable sensation from the insulting confession of a crime!

Next to a just war, fellow-citizens, we wage a defensive one. This is its true and only character. Our fields were not, indeed, invaded, or our towns entered and sacked. But still it is purely a war of defence. It was to stop reiterated encroachment we took up arms. Persons, property, rights, character, sovereignty, justice, all these were contumaciously invaded at our hands. Let impartial truth say, if it were for ambition, or conquest, or plunder, or through any false estimate of character, or pride that we appealed to the sword. No, Americans! No! Republicans, there will rest no such blot upon your moderate, your pacific councils. It is an imperfect view of this question which considers as a defensive war, only that which is entered upon when the assailant is bursting through your doors and levelling the musket at the bosoms of your women and children. Think how a nation may be abridged, may be dismantled of its rights, may be cut down in its liberties, this side of an open attack. The Athenian law punished seduction of female honor more severely than it did force. And the nation, that would adopt it as a maxim to lie by under whatever curtailments of its sovereignty, resolving upon no resistance until the actual investment of its soil, might find itself too fatally trenched upon, too exhausted in resources, or too enfeebled in spirit, to rouse itself when the foe was rushing through the gates.

The war-whoop of the Indian had, indeed, been

heard in the habitations of our frontier; and it is impossible to abstain from imputing to the agency of our enemy this horrid species of invasion. Their hand must be in it. For although it may not be directly instigated by their government on the other side of the water, yet past proofs make it to the last degree probable that the intrigues of their sub-agents in the Canadas are instrumental to the wickedness. Nor will a rational mind hesitate to infer, that the same spirit which, from that quarter at least, could send, for the most nefarious purposes, a polished spy through our cities, would also, varying the form of its iniquity, let loose upon us the hatchet and the scalping knife. Great Britain, indeed, had not declared war against us in form, but she had made it upon us in fact. She had plundered us of our property, she had imprisoned our citizens; nor can any accommodation now erase from our memories, although it may from our public discussions, the bloody memorials of her attack upon the Chesapeake.

Since, fellow-citizens, that through all these motives a war with Britain has been forced upon us, while bearing up, against whatever of pressure it may bring, with the energy and the hope of our fathers, let us deduce also this of consolation: that it will, more than any thing else, have a tendency to break the sway which that nation is enabled to hold over us. I would address myself on this point to the candid minds of our countrymen, and to all such among them as have bosoms penetrated with a genuine love for our republican systems. We form, probably for the first time in all history, the instance of a nation descended, and politically detached from another, but still keeping up the most intimate connexions with the original and once parent stock. The similarity of our manners and customs; our language being one, and our religion nearly one; the entire identity in individual appearance, and in all things else, which is spread before the American and the English eye; our boundless social intercommunica-

tion; the very personal respectability, in so many instances, of those of that nation who, in such numbers, come to this; pecuniary connexions so universal and unlimited; dependent upon her loom, dependent upon her fashions, dependent upon her judicature, dependent upon her drama: reading none but her books, or scarcely any others; taking up her character and actions chiefly at the hands of her own annalists or panegyrists; nothing in fine that comes from that quarter being regarded as foreign, but as well her inhabitants as her modes of life and all her usages, being taken to be as of our own; these complicated similitudes operate like clamps and holdings to bind us insensibly to her sides, yielding to her an easy, an increasing, and an unsuspected ascendancy.

It may be said this is an advantageous ascendancy; that, as a young people, we may profit of the intimacy, have her arts and her manners copy her many meliorations of existence, eat of her intellectual food and get *stamina* the more quickly upon its nourishment. But stop Americans! do you not know that this same people are the subjects of an old and luxurious monarchy, with all the corrupt attachments to which it leads; that if not their duty, it is naturally their practice to breathe the praise and inculcate the love of their own forms of polity? Do you not know, that if not the correlative duty, it is, as certainly, their correlative practice, to deal out disapprobation, even contempt for our own, and the habits which alone they should superinduce? And is there not cause for apprehension that the superiority, which we so easily, often so slavishly, choose to yield her on all other points, that the moral prostration in which we consent to fall before her footstool, may also trench upon the reverence due to our own public institutions, producing results at which all our fears should startle? If, fellow-citizens, our freedom, our republican freedom, which, to make lasting, we should cherish with uninterrupted constancy and the purest love, has a foe more deadly than any other, it is

probably this; this is the destroying spirit which can make its way slowly and unperceived, but surely and fatally. If we stood further off, much further off, from Britain; we should still be near enough to derive all that she has valuable, while we should be more safe from the poison of her political touch. Just as, at this day, we can draw upon the repositories of genius and literature among the ancients, while we escape the vices of paganism and the errors of their misleading philosophy. But if Athenian citizens filled our towns; if we spoke their language, wore their dress, took them to our homes; if we kept looking up to them with general imitation and subserviency, the truths of Christianity themselves would be in danger of yielding to the adoration of the false gods!

This war may produce, auspiciously and forever, the effect of throwing us at a safer distance from so contaminating an intimacy, making our liberty thrive more securely, and ourselves more independent—privately and politically. From no other nation are we in danger in the same way; for, with no other nation, have we the same affinities, but, on the contrary, numerous points of repulsion that interpose as our guard. Let us have a shy connexion with them all, for history gives the admonition, that for the last twenty years, every nation of the world that has come too close in friendship with either our present enemy, or her neighbor, the ferocious giant of the land, has lost its liberties, been prostrated, or been ravaged. After the war of our revolution, we were still so much in the feebleness of youth as to take the outstretched hand of Britain, who could establish our industry, shape our occupations, and give them, involuntarily to ourselves, the direction advantageous to her views. But, henceforth, we shall stand upon a pedestal whose base is fixed among ourselves, whence we may proudly look around and afar—from the ocean to the mountains, from the mountains to the farthest west, beholding our fruitful fields, listening to the hammer of our work-

shops, the cheerful noise of our looms: where the view, on all sides, of native numbers, opulence and skill, will enable us to stamp more at pleasure the future destinies of our happy land. Possibly, also, the sameness of our pursuits in so many things, with Britain, instead of pointing to close connexions with her, as her politicians so steadily hold up, will at length indicate to the foresight of our own statesmen unalterable reasons to an intercourse more restrained—it may be the elements of a lasting rivalship.

Animated by all the motives which demand and justify this contest, let us advance to it with resolute and high beating hearts, supported by the devotion to our beloved country, which wishes for her triumphs cannot fail to kindle. Dear to us is this beloved country, far dearer than we can express, for all the true blessings that flourish within her bosom; the country of our fathers, the country of our children, the scene of our dearest affections—whose rights and liberties have been consecrated by the blood whose current runs so fresh in our own veins. Who shall touch such a country, and not fire the patriotism and unsheath the swords of us all? No, Americans! while you reserve your independent privilege of rendering, at all times, your suffrages as you please, let our proud foe be undeceived. Let her, let the world learn, now and forever, that the voice of our nation, when once legitimately expressed, is holy—is impetuous! that it is a summons of duty to every citizen; that when we strike at a foreign foe, the sacred bond of country becomes the pledge of a concentrated effort; that in such a cause, and at such a crisis, we feel with but one heart and strike with our whole strength! We are the only nation in the world, fellow-citizens, where the people and the government stand, in all things, identified; where all the acts of the latter are immediately submitted to the superior revision of the former; where every blow at the general safety becomes the personal concern of each indi-

vidual. Happy people, happy government! will you give up, will you not defend such blessings? We are also perhaps the only genuine republic which, since the days of the ancients, has taken up arms against a foreign foe in defence of its rights and its liberties. Animating thought! warmed with the fire of ancient freedom, may we not expect to see the valor of Thermopylæ and Marathon again displayed? The Congress of eighteen hundred and twelve, here, within these august walls, have proclaimed to the world that other feelings than those of servility, avarice, or fear, pervade the American bosom; that in the hope and purity of youth, we are not debased by the passions of a corrupt old age; that our sensibilities are other than sordid; that we are ambitious of the dignified port of freemen; that while pacific we know the value of national rights and national justice, and with the spirit, due to our lasting prosperity as a republic, design to repel authenticated outrages upon either. That we will and dare act as becomes a free, an enlightened, and a brave people. Illustrious Congress! worthy to have your names recounted with the illustrious fathers of our revolution! for, what grievances were those that led to the great act which made us a nation, that have not been equalled, shall I say have not been surpassed, by those which moved to your deed? And what noble hazards did they encounter which you ought not to brave?

If we are not fully prepared for war, let the sublime spectacle be soon exhibited, that a free and a valiant nation, with our numbers, and a just cause, is always a powerful nation; is always ready to defend its essential rights! The Congress of '76 declared Independence and hurled defiance at this same insatiate foe, six and thirty years ago, with an army of seventeen thousand hostile troops just landed upon our shores; and shall we now hesitate? Shall we bow our necks in submission, shall we make an ignominious surrender of our birthright under the plea that we are not pre-

pared to defend it? No, Americans! Yours has been a pacific republic, and therefore has not exhibited military preparation; but it is a free republic, and therefore will it now, as before, soon command battalions, discipline, courage! Could a general of old by only stamping on the earth raise up armies, and shall a whole nation of freemen, at such a time, know not where to look for them? The soldiers of Bunker's hill, the soldiers of Bennington, the soldiers of the Wabash, the seamen of Tripoli contradict it!

By one of the surviving patriots of our revolution I have been told, that in the Congress of 1774, among other arguments used to prevent a war, and separation from Great Britain, the danger of having our towns battered down and burnt was zealously urged. The venerable Christopher Gadsden, of South Carolina, rose and replied to it in these memorable words: "Our seaport towns, Mr. President, are composed of brick and wood. If they are destroyed, we have clay and timber enough in our country to rebuild them. But, if the liberties of our country are destroyed, where shall we find the materials to replace them?" Behold in this an example of virtuous sentiment fit to be imitated.

Indulge me with another illustration of American patriotism, derived from the same source. During the siege at Boston, general Washington consulted Congress upon the propriety of bombarding the town. Mr. Hancock was then President of Congress. After general Washington's letter was read, a solemn silence ensued. This was broken by a member making a motion that the House should resolve itself into a committee of the whole, in order that Mr. Hancock might give his opinion upon the important subject, as he was so deeply interested from having all his estate in Boston. After he left the chair, he addressed the chairman of the committee of the whole in the following words: "It is true, sir, nearly all the property I have in the world is in houses and other real estate in

the town of Boston; but if the expulsion of the British army from it, and the liberties of our country require their being burnt to ashes, issue the order for that purpose immediately."

What has ancient or modern story to boast beyond such elevated specimens of public virtue; and what inspiring lessons of duty do they teach to us? War, fellow-citizens, is not the greatest of evils. Long submission to injustice is worse. Peace, a long peace, a peace purchased by mean and inglorious sacrifices, is worse, is far worse. War takes away a life destined by nature to death. It produces chiefly bodily evils. But when ignoble peace robs us of virtue, debases the mind and chills its best feelings, it renders life a living death, and makes us offensive above ground. The evils of ignoble peace are, an inordinate love of money; rage of party spirit; and a willingness to endure even slavery itself, rather than bear pecuniary deprivations or brave manly hazards. 'The states of Holland and of Italy will be found, at several stages of their history, strikingly to exemplify this remark.

War in a just cause produces patriotism: witness the speech of Gadsden! It produces the most noble disinterestedness where our country is concerned: witness the speech of Hancock! It serves to destroy party spirit, which may become worse than war. In war death is produced without personal hatred; but under the influence of party spirit inflamed by the sordid desires of an inglorious peace, the most malignant passions are generated, and we hate with the spirit of murderers.

Could the departed heroes of the revolution rise from their sleep and behold their descendants hanging contentedly over hoards of money, or casting up British invoices, while so long a list of wrongs still looked them in the face, calling for retribution, what would they say? Would they not hasten back to their tombs, now more welcome than ever, since they would con-

ceal from their view the base conduct of those sons for whom they so gallantly fought; and so gallantly fell? But stop, return, return, illustrious band! stay and behold, stay and applaud what we too are doing! we will not dishonor your noble achievements, we will defend the inheritance you bequeathed us, we will wipe away all past stains, we will maintain our rights at the sword, or, like you, we will die! Then shall we render our ashes worthy to mingle with yours.

Sacred in our celebrations be this day to the end of time! Revered be the memories of the statesmen and orators whose wisdom led to the act of Independence, and of the gallant soldiers who sealed it with their blood! May the fires of their genius and courage animate and sustain us in our contest, and bring it to a like glorious result! May it be carried on with singleness to the objects that alone summoned us to it; as a great and imperious duty, irksome yet necessary! May there be a willing, a joyful, immolation of all selfish passions on the altar of a common country! May the hearts of our combatants be bold, and, under a propitious heaven, their swords flash victory! May a speedy peace bless us and the passions of war go off, leaving in their place a stronger love of country and of each other! Then may pacific glories, accumulating and beaming from the excitement of the national mind, long be ours; a roused intellect, a spirit of patriotic improvement in whatever can gild the American name; in arts, in literature, in science, in manufactures, in agriculture, in legislation, in morals, in imbuing our admirable forms of polity with still more and more perfection; may these then and long be ours! may common perils and common triumphs bind us more closely together! may the era furnish names to our annals "on whom late time a kindling eye shall turn!" Revered be the dust of those who fall, sweet their memories!—their country vindicated, their duty done,

an honorable renown, the regrets of a nation, the eulogies of friendship, the slow and moving dirges of the camp, the tears of beauty—all, all, will sanctify their doom! Honored be those who outlive the strife of arms! our rights established, justice secured, a haughty foe taught to respect the freemen she had abused and plundered; to survive to such recollections and such a consciousness, is there, can there be, a nobler reward!

AN ORATION,

PRONOUNCED

AT CAMBRIDGE, BEFORE THE SOCIETY OF PHI BETA
KAPPA, AUGUST 26, 1824 :

BY EDWARD EVERETT.

A MR. PRESIDENT, AND GENTLEMEN,

IN discharging the honorable trust of being the public organ of your sentiments on this occasion, I have been anxious that the hour, which we here pass together, should be occupied by those reflections exclusively, which belong to us as scholars. Our association in this fraternity is academical; we engaged in it before our *alma mater* dismissed us from her venerable roof, to wander in the various paths of life; and we have now come together in the academical holidays, from every variety of pursuit, from almost every part of our country, to meet on common ground, as the brethren of one literary household. The professional cares of life, like the conflicting tribes of Greece, have proclaimed to us a short armistice, that we may come up in peace to our Olympia.

But from the wide field of literary speculation, and the innumerable subjects of meditation which arise in it, a selection must be made. And it has seemed to me proper, that we should direct our thoughts, not merely to a subject of interest to scholars, but to one, which may recommend itself as peculiarly appropriate to us. If 'that old man eloquent, whom the dishonest victory at Cheronæa killed with report,' could devote fifteen years to the composition of his Panegyric on Athens, I shall need no excuse to a society of American scholars, in choosing for the theme of an address,

on an occasion like this, the peculiar motives to intellectual exertion in America. In this subject that curiosity, which every scholar feels in tracing and comparing the springs of mental activity, is heightened and dignified, by the important connexion of the inquiry with the condition and prospects of our native land.

In the full comprehension of the terms, the motives to intellectual exertion in a country embrace the most important springs of national character. Pursued into its details, the study of these springs of national character is often little better than fanciful speculation. The questions, why Asia has almost always been the abode of despotism; and Europe more propitious to liberty; why the Egyptians were abject and melancholy; the Greeks inventive, elegant and versatile; the Romans stern, saturnine, and, in matters of literature, for the most part servile imitators of a people, whom they conquered, despised, and never equalled; why tribes of barbarians from the north and east, not known to differ essentially from each other, at the time of their settlement in Europe, should have laid the foundation of national characters so dissimilar, as those of the Spanish, French, German, and English nations; these are questions to which a few general answers may be attempted, that will probably be just and safe, only in proportion as they are vague and comprehensive. Difficult as it is, even in the individual man, to point out precisely the causes, under the influence of which members of the same community and of the same family, placed apparently in the same circumstances, grow up with characters the most diverse; it is infinitely more difficult to perform the same analysis on a subject so vast as a nation; where it is first not a small question what the character is, before you touch the inquiry into the circumstances by which it was formed.

But as, in the case of individual character, there are certain causes of undisputed and powerful opera-

tion; there are also in national character, causes equally undisputed of improvement and excellence, on the one hand, and of degeneracy and decline, on the other. The philosophical student of history, the impartial observer of man, may often fix on circumstances, which, in their operation on the minds of the people, in furnishing the motives and giving the direction to intellectual exertion, have had the chief agency in making them what they were or are. Nor are there many exercises of the speculative principle more elevated than this. It is in the highest degree curious to trace physical facts into their political, intellectual and moral consequences; and to show how the climate, the geographical position, and even the particular topography of a region connect themselves by evident association, with the state of society, its predominating pursuits, and characteristic institutions.

In the case of other nations, particularly of those which in the great drama of the world have long since passed from the stage, these speculations are often only curious. The operation of a tropical climate in enervating and fitting a people for despotism; the influence of a broad river or a lofty chain of mountains, in arresting the march of conquest or of emigration, and thus becoming the boundary not merely of governments, but of languages, literature, institutions and character; the effect of a quarry of fine marble on the progress of the liberal arts; the agency of popular institutions in promoting popular eloquence, and the tremendous reaction of popular eloquence on the fortunes of a state: the comparative destiny of colonial settlements, of insular states, of tribes fortified in nature's Alpine battlements, or scattered over a smiling region of olive gardens and vineyards; these are all topics, indeed, of rational curiosity and liberal speculation, but important only as they may illustrate the prospects of our own country.

It is therefore when we turn the inquiry to our country, when we survey its features, search its history,

and contemplate its institutions, to see what the motives are, which are to excite and guide the minds of the people; when we dwell not on a distant, an uncertain, an almost forgotten past; but on an impending future, teeming with life and action, toward which we are rapidly and daily swept forward, and with which we stand in the dearest connexion, which can bind the generations of man together; a future, which our own characters, our own actions, our own principles will do something to stamp with glory or shame; it is then that the inquiry becomes practical, momentous, and worthy the attention of every patriotic scholar. We then strive, as far as it is in the power of philosophical investigation to do it, to unfold our country's reverend auspices, to cast its great horoscope in the national sky, where many stars are waning, and many have set; to ascertain whether the soil which we love, as that where our fathers are laid and we shall presently be laid with them, will be trod in times to come by a people virtuous, enlightened and free.

The first of the circumstances which are acting and will continue to act, with a strong peculiarity among us, and which must prove one of the most powerful influences, in exciting and directing the intellect of the country, is the new form of civil society, which has here been devised and established. I shall not wander so far from the literary limits of this occasion, nor into a field so oft trodden, as the praises of free political institutions. But the direct and appropriate influence on mental effort of institutions like ours, has not yet, perhaps, received the attention, which, from every American scholar, it richly deserves. I have ventured to say, that a new form of civil society has here been devised and established. The ancient Grecian republics, indeed, were free enough within the walls of the single city, of which most of them were wholly or chiefly composed; but to these single cities the freedom, as well as the power, was confined. Toward the confederated or tributary states, the gov-

ernment was generally a despotism, more capricious and not less stern, than that of a single tyrant. Rome as a state was never free; in every period of her history, authentic and dubious, royal, republican and imperial, her proud citizens were the slaves of an artful, accomplished, wealthy aristocracy; and nothing but the hard fought battles of her stern tribunes can redeem her memory to the friends of liberty. In ancient and modern history there is no example, before our own, of a purely elective and representative system. It is therefore, on an entirely novel plan, that, in this country, the whole direction and influence of affairs; all the trusts and honors of society; the power of making, abrogating and administering the laws; the whole civil authority and sway, from the highest post in the government to the smallest village trust, are put directly into the market of merit. Whatsoever efficacy there is in high station and exalted honors, to call out and exercise the powers, either by awakening the emulation of the aspirants or exciting the efforts of the incumbents, is here directly exerted on the largest mass of men, with the smallest possible deductions. Nothing is bestowed on the chance of birth, nothing depends on proximity to the fountain of honor, nothing is to be acquired by espousing hereditary family interests; but whatever is desired must be sought in the way of a broad, fair, personal competition. It requires little argument to show, that such a system must most widely and most powerfully have the effect of appealing to whatever of energy the land contains; of searching out, with magnetic instinct, in the remotest quarters, the latent ability of its children.

It may be objected, and it has been, that for want of a hereditary government, we lose that powerful spring of action which resides in the patronage of such a government, and must emanate from the crown. With many individuals, friendly to our popular institutions, it is nevertheless an opinion, that we must consent to lose something of the genial influence of princely and

royal patronage on letters and arts, and find our consolation in the political benefits of our free system. It may be doubted, however, whether this view be not entirely false. A crown is in itself a strip of velvet set with jewels; the dignity which it imparts and the honor with which it is invested, depend on the numbers, resources, and the intelligence of the people who permit it to be worn. The crown of the late emperor of Hayti, is said to have been one of the most brilliant in the world; and Theodore of Corsica, while confined for debt in the Fleet in London, sat on as high a throne as the king of England. Since then the power and influence of the crown are really in the people, it seems preposterous to say, that what increases the importance of the people can diminish the effect of that, which proceeds from them, depends upon them, and reverts to them. Sovereignty, in all its truth and efficacy, exists here, as much as ever it did at London, at Paris, at Rome, or at Susa. It exists, it is true, in an equal proportionate diffusion; a part of it belongs to the humblest citizen. The error seems to be in confounding the idea of sovereignty, with the quality of an individual sovereign. Wheresoever Providence gathers into a nation the tribes of men, there a social life, with its energies and functions, is conferred; and this social life is sovereignty. By the healthful action of our representative system, it is made to pervade the empire like the air; to reach the farthest, descend to the lowest, and bind the distant together; it is made not only to co-operate with the successful and assist the prosperous, but to cheer the remote, 'to remember the forgotten, to attend to the neglected, to visit the forsaken.' Before the rising of our republic in the world, the faculties of men have had but one weary pilgrimage to perform—to travel up to court. By an improvement on the Jewish polity, which enjoined on the nation a visit thrice a year to the holy city; the great, the munificent, the enlightened states of the ancient and modern world have required a constant resi-

dence on the chosen spot. Provincial has become another term for inferior and rude; and unpolite, which once meant only rural, has got to signify, in all our languages, something little better than barbarous. But since, in the nature of things, a small part only of the population of a large state can, by physical possibility, be crowded within the walls of a city, and there receive the genial beams of metropolitan favor, it follows that the great mass of men are cut off from the operation of some of the strongest excitements to exertion. It is rightfully urged then, as a great advantage of our system, that the excitements of society go down as low as its burdens, and search out and bring forward whatsoever of ability and zeal are comprehended within the limits of the land. This is but the beginning of the benefit, or rather it is not yet the benefit. It is the effect of this diffusion of privileges that is precious. Capacity and opportunity, the twin sisters, who can scarce subsist but with each other, are now brought together. The people who are to choose, and from whose number are to be chosen, by their neighbors, the highest offices of state, infallibly feel an impulse to mental activity; they read, think, and compare; they found village schools, they collect social libraries, they prepare their children for the higher establishments of education. The world, I think, has been abused on the tendency of institutions perfectly popular. From the ill-organized states of antiquity, terrific examples of license and popular misrule are quoted, to prove that man requires to be protected from himself, without asking who is to protect him from the protector, himself also a man. While from the very first settlement of America to the present day, the most prominent trait of our character has been to cherish and diffuse the means of education. The village school-house, and the village church, are the monuments, which the American people have erected to their freedom; to read, and write, and think, are the licentious practices, which have characterized our democracy.

But it will be urged, perhaps, that, though the effect of our institutions be to excite the intellect of the nation, they excite it too much in a political direction; that the division and subdivision of the country into states and districts, and the equal diffusion throughout them of political privileges and powers, whatever favorable effect in other ways they may produce, are attended by this evil,—that they kindle a political ambition, where it would not and ought not be felt; and particularly that they are unfriendly in their operation on literature, as they call the aspiring youth, from the patient and laborious vigils of the student, to plunge prematurely into the conflicts of the forum. It may, however, be doubted, whether there be any foundation whatever for a charge like this; and whether the fact, so far as it is one, that the talent and ambition of the country incline, at present, to a political course, be not owing to causes wholly unconnected, with the free character of our institutions. It need not be said that the administration of the government of a country, whether it be liberal or despotic, is the first thing to be provided for. Some persons must be employed in making and administering the laws, before any other interest can receive attention. Our fathers, the pilgrims, before they left the vessel, in which for five months they had been tossed on the ocean, before setting foot on the new world of their desire, drew up a simple constitution of government. As this is the first care in the order of nature, it ever retains its paramount importance. Society must be preserved in its constituted forms, or there is no safety for life, no security for property, no permanence for any institution civil, moral or religious. The first efforts then of social men are of necessity political. Apart from every call of ambition, honorable or selfish, of interest enlarged or mercenary, the care of the government is the first care of a civilized community. In the early stages of social progress, where there is little property and a scanty population, the whole strength of the so-

ciety must be employed in its support and defence. Though we are constantly receding from these stages we have not wholly left them. Even our rapidly increasing population is and will for some time remain small, compared with the space over which it is diffused; and this, with the total absence of large hereditary fortunes, will create a demand for political services, on the one hand, and a necessity of rendering them on the other. There is then no ground for ascribing the political tendency of the talent and activity of this country, to an imagined incompatibility of popular institutions with the profound cultivation of letters. Suppose our government were changed to-morrow; that the five points of a stronger government were introduced, a hereditary sovereign, an order of nobility, an established church, a standing army, and a vigilant police; and that these should take place of that admirable system, which now, like the genial air, pervades all, supports all, cheers all, and is nowhere seen. Suppose this change made, and other circumstances to remain the same; our population no more dense, our boundaries as wide, and the accumulation of private wealth no more abundant. Would there, in the new state of things, be less interest in politics? By the terms of the supposition, the leading class of the community, the nobles, are to be politicians by birth. By the nature of the case, a large portion of the remainder, who gain their livelihood by their industry and talents, would be engrossed, not indeed in the free political competition, which now prevails, but in pursuing the interests of rival court factions. One class only, the peasantry, would remain, which would take less interest in politics than the corresponding class in a free state; or rather, this is a new class, which invariably comes in with a strong government; and no one can seriously think the cause of science and literature would be promoted, by substituting an European peasantry, in the place of, perhaps, the most substantial uncorrupted population on earth, the American yeo-

manry. Moreover, the evil in question is with us a self-correcting evil. If the career of politics be more open, and the temptation to crowd it stronger, competition will spring up, numbers will engage in the pursuit; the less able, the less industrious, the less ambitious must retire, and leave the race to the swift and the battle to the strong. But in hereditary governments no such remedy exists. One class of society, by the nature of its position, must be rulers, magistrates or politicians. Weak or strong, willing or unwilling, they must play the game, though they, as well as the people, pay the bitter forfeit. The obnoxious king can seldom shake off the empoisoned purple; he must wear the crown of thorns, till it is struck off at the scaffold; and the same artificial necessity has obliged generations of nobles, in all the old states of Europe, to toil and bleed for a

{ Power too great to keep or to resign. }

Where the compulsion stops short of these afflicting extremities, still, under the governments in question, a large portion of the community is unavoidably destined to the calling of the courtier, the soldier, the party retainer; to a life of service, intrigue and court attendance; and thousands, and those the prominent individuals in society, are brought up to look on a livelihood gained by private industry as base; on study as the pedant's trade, on labor as the badge of slavery. I look in vain in institutions like these, for any thing essentially favorable to intellectual progress. On the contrary, while they must draw away the talent and ambition of the country, quite as much as popular institutions can do it, into pursuits foreign from the culture of the intellect, they necessarily doom to obscurity no small part of the mental energy of the land. For that mental energy has been equally diffused by sterner levellers than ever marched in the van of a Revolution; the nature of man and the Providence of

God. Native character, strength and quickness of mind, are not of the number of distinctions and accomplishments, that human institutions can monopolize within a city's walls. In quiet times, they remain and perish in the obscurity, to which a false organization of society consigns them. In dangerous, convulsed and trying times, they spring up in the fields, in the village hamlets, and on the mountain tops, and teach the surprised favorites of human law, that bright eyes, skilful hands, quick perceptions, firm purpose, and brave hearts, are not the exclusive *appanage* of courts. Our popular institutions are favorable to intellectual improvement because their foundation is in dear nature. They do not consign the greater part of the social frame to torpidity and mortification. They send out a vital nerve to every member of the community, by which its talents and power, great or small, are brought into living conjunction and strong sympathy with the kindred intellect of the nation; and every impression on every part vibrates with electric rapidity through the whole. They encourage nature to perfect her work; they make education, the soul's nutriment, cheap; they bring up remote and shrinking talent into the cheerful field of competition; in a thousand ways they provide an audience for lips, which nature has touched with persuasion; they put a lyre into the hands of genius; they bestow on all who deserve it or seek it, the only patronage worth having, the only patronage that ever struck out a spark of 'celestial fire,'—the patronage of fair opportunity. This is a day of improved education; new systems of teaching are devised; modes of instruction, choice of studies, adaptation of text books, the whole machinery of means, have been brought in our day under severe revision. But were I to attempt to point out the most efficacious and comprehensive improvement in education, the engine, by which the greatest portion of mind could be brought and kept under cultivation, the discipline which would reach farthest,

sink deepest, and cause the word of instruction, not to spread over the surface like an artificial hue, carefully laid on, but to penetrate to the heart and soul of its objects, it would be popular institutions. Give the people an object in promoting education, and the best methods will infallibly be suggested by that instinctive ingenuity of our nature, which provides means for great and precious ends. Give the people an object in promoting education, and the worn hand of labor will be opened to the last farthing, that its children may enjoy means denied to itself. This great contest about black boards and sand tables will then lose something of its importance, and even the exalted names of Bell and Lancaster may sink from that very lofty height, where an over hasty admiration has placed them.

But though it be conceded to us, that the tendency, which is alleged to exist in this country toward the political career, is not a vicious effect of our free institutions, still it may be inquired, whether the new form of social organization among us is at least to produce no corresponding modification of our literature? As the country advances, as the population becomes denser, as wealth accumulates, on the various occasions of a large, prosperous and polite community call into strong action and vigorous competition the literary talent of the country, will no peculiar form or direction be given to its literature, by the nature of its institutions? To this question an answer must, without hesitation, be given in the affirmative. Literature as well in its origin, as in its true and only genuine character, is but a more perfect communication of man with man and mind with mind. It is a grave, sustained, deliberate utterance of fact, of opinion, and feeling; or a free and happy reflection of nature, of characters, or of manners; and if it be not these it is poor imitation. It may, therefore, be assumed as certain, that the peculiarity of our condition and institutions will be reflected in some peculiarity of

our literature ; but what that shall be it is as yet too early to say. Literary history informs us of many studies, which have been neglected as dangerous to existing governments ; and many others which have been cultivated because they were prudent and safe. We have hardly the means of settling from analogy, what direction the mind will most decisively take, when left under strong excitements to action, wholly without restraint from the arm of power. It is impossible to anticipate what garments our native muses will weave for themselves. To foretell our literature would be to create it. There was a time before an epic poem, a tragedy, or a historical composition had ever been produced by the wit of man. It was a time of vast and powerful empires, of populous and wealthy cities. But these new and beautiful forms of human thought and feeling all sprang up in Greece, under the stimulus of her free institutions. Before they appeared in the world, it would have been idle for the philosopher to form conjectures, as to the direction, which the kindling genius of the age was to assume. He, who could form, could and would realize the anticipation, and it would cease to be an anticipation. Assuredly epic poetry was invented then and not before, when the gorgeous vision of the Iliad, not in its full detail of circumstance, but in the dim conception of its leading scenes and sterner features, burst into the soul of Homer. Impossible, indeed, were the task fully to foretell the progress of the mind, under the influence of institutions as new, as peculiar, and far more animating, than those of Greece. But if, as no one will deny, our political system bring more minds into action on equal terms, if it provide a prompter circulation of thought throughout the community, if it give weight and emphasis to more voices, if it swell to tens of thousands and millions those 'sons of emulation, who crowd the narrow strait where honor travels,' then it seems not too much to expect some peculiarity at least, if we may not call it improvement,

in that literature, which is but the voice and utterance of all this mental action.) There is little doubt that the instrument of communication itself will receive great improvements; that the written and spoken language will acquire force and power; possibly, that forms of address, wholly new, will be struck out, to meet the universal demand for new energy. When the improvement or the invention, (whatever it be,) comes, it will come unlooked for, as well to its happy author as the world. But where great interests are at stake, great concerns rapidly succeeding each other, depending on almost innumerable wills, and yet requiring to be apprehended in a glance, and explained in a word; where movements are to be given to a vast empire, not by transmitting orders, but by diffusing opinions, exciting feelings, and touching the electric chord of sympathy, there language and expression will become intense, and the old processes of communication must put on a vigor and a directness, adapted to the aspect of the times. Our country is called, as it is, practical; but this is the element for intellectual action. No strongly marked and high toned literature; poetry, eloquence, or ethics; ever appeared but in the pressure, the din, and crowd of great interests, great enterprises, perilous risks, and dazzling rewards. Statesmen, and warriors, and poets, and orators, and artists, start up under one and the same excitement. They are all branches of one stock. They form, and cheer, and stimulate, and, what is worth all the rest, understand each other; and it is as truly the sentiment of the student, in the recesses of his cell, as of the soldier in the ranks, which breathes in the exclamation:

To all the sons of sense proclaim,
One glorious hour of crowded life
Is worth an age without a name.

But we are brought back to the unfavorable aspect of the subject, by being reminded out of history of the

splendid patronage, which arbitrary governments have bestowed on letters, and which, from the nature of the case, can hardly be extended even to the highest merit, under institutions like our own. We are told of the munificent pensions, the rich establishments, the large foundations; of the museums erected, the libraries gathered, the endowments granted, by Ptolemies, Augustuses, and Louises of ancient and modern days. We are asked to remark the fruit of this noble patronage; wonders of antiquarian or scientific lore, The-sauruses and Corpuses, efforts of erudition from which the emulous student, who would read all things, weigh all things, surpass all things, recoils in horror; volumes and shelves of volumes, before which meek-eyed patience folds her hands in despair.

When we (have contemplated these things, and) turn our thoughts back to our poor republican land, to our frugal treasury, and the caution with which it is dispensed; to our modest fortunes, and the thrift with which they are hoarded; to our scanty public libraries, and the plain brick walls within which they are deposited: we may be apt to form gloomy auguries of the influence of free political institutions on our literature. It is important then, that we examine more carefully the experience of former ages, and see how far their institutions, (as they have been more or less popular,) have been more or less associated with displays of intellectual excellence. When we make this examination, we shall be gratified to find, that the precedents are all in favor of liberty. The greatest efforts of human genius have been made, where the nearest approach to free institutions has taken place. There shone not forth one ray of intellectual light, to cheer the long and gloomy ages of the Memphian and Babylonian despots. Not a historian, not an orator, not a poet is heard of in their annals. When you ask, what was achieved by the generations of thinking beings, the millions of men, whose natural genius was as bright as that of the Greeks, nay, who forestalled the Greeks in the first in-

vention of many of the arts, you are told that they built the pyramids of Memphis, the temples of Thebes, and the tower of Babylon, and carried Sesostris and Ninus upon their shoulders, from the west of Africa to the Indus. Mark the contrast in Greece. With the first emerging of that country into the light of political liberty, the poems of Homer appear. Some centuries of political misrule and literary darkness follow, and then the great constellation of their geniuses seems to rise at once. The stormy eloquence and the deep philosophy, the impassioned drama and the grave history, were all produced for the entertainment of that 'fierce democratie' of Athens. Here then the genial influence of liberty on letters is strongly put to the test. Athens was certainly a free state; free to licentiousness, free to madness. The rich were arbitrarily pillaged to defray the expenses of the state, the great were banished to appease the envy of their rivals, the wise sacrificed to the fury of the populace. It was a state, in short, where liberty existed with most of the imperfections, which have led men to love and praise despotism. Still, however, it was for this lawless, merciless people, that the most chastised and accomplished literature, which the world has known, was produced. The philosophy of Plato was the attraction, which drew to a morning's walk in the olive gardens of the academy, the young men of this factious city. Those tumultuous assemblies of Athens, the very same, which rose in their wrath, and to a man, and clamored for the blood of Phocion, required to be addressed, not in the cheap extemporaneous rant of modern demagogues, but in the elaborate and thrice repeated orations of Demosthenes. No! the noble and elegant arts of Greece grew up in no Augustan age, enjoyed neither royal nor imperial patronage. Unknown before in the world, strangers on the Nile, and strangers on the Euphrates, they sprang at once into life in a region not unlike our own New England—iron bound, sterile and free. The imperial astronomers of Chaldæa went

up almost to the stars in their observatories; but it was a Greek, who first foretold an eclipse, and measured the year. The nations of the East invented the alphabet, but not a line has reached us of profane literature, in any of their languages; and it is owing to the embalming power of Grecian genius, that the invention itself has been transmitted to the world. The Egyptian architects could erect structures, which after three thousand five hundred years are still standing, in their uncouth original majesty; but it was only on the barren soil of Attica, that the beautiful columns of the Parthenon and the Theseum could rest, which are standing also. With the decline of liberty in Greece, began the decline of all her letters and all her arts; though her tumultuous democracies were succeeded by liberal and accomplished princes. Compare the literature of the Alexandrian with that of the Periclean age; how cold, pedantic and imitative! Compare, I will not say, the axes, the eggs, the altars, and the other frigid devices of the pensioned wits in the museum at Alexandria, but compare their best spirits with those of independent Greece; Callimachus with Pindar, Lycophron with Sophocles, Aristophanes of Byzantium with Aristotle, and Apollonius the Rhodian with Homer. When we descend to Rome, to the Augustan age, the exalted era of Mæcenas, we find one uniform work of imitation, often of translation. The choicest geniuses seldom rise beyond a happy transfusion of the Grecian masters. Horace translates Alcæus, Terence translates Menander, Lucretius translates Epicurus, Virgil translates Homer and Cicero—I had almost said, translates Demosthenes and Plato. But the soul of liberty did burst forth from the lips of Cicero, 'her form had not yet lost all its original brightness,' her inspiration produced in him the only specimens of a purely original literature, which Rome has transmitted to us. After him, their literary history is written in one line of Tacitus; *gliscente adulatione, magna ingenia deterrebantur*. The fine arts revived a little under the

princes of the Flavian house, but never rose higher than a successful imitation of the waning excellence of Greece. With the princes of this line, the arts of Rome expired, and Constantine the great was obliged to tear down an arch of Trajan for sculptures, wherewithal to adorn his own. In modern times civilized states have multiplied; political institutions have varied in different states, and at different times in the same state; some liberal institutions have existed in the bosom of societies otherwise despotic; and a great addition of new studies has been made to the encyclopædia, which have all been cultivated by great minds, and some of which, as the physical and experimental sciences, have little or no direct connexion with the state of liberty. These circumstances perplex, in some degree, the inquiry into the effect of free institutions on intellectual improvement in modern times. There are times and places, where it would seem, that the muses, both the gay and the severe, had been transformed into court ladies. Upon the whole, however, the modern history of literature bears but a cold testimony to the genial influence of the governments, under which it has grown up. Dante and Petrarch composed their beautiful works in exile; Boccaccio complains in the most celebrated of his, that he was transfixed with the darts of envy and calumny; Machiavelli was pursued by the party of the Medici for resisting their tyrannical designs; Guicciardini retired in disgust to compose his history in voluntary exile; Galileo confessed in the prisons of the Inquisition, that the earth did not move; Ariosto lived in poverty; and Tasso died in want and despair.* Cervantes, after he had immortalized himself in his great work, was obliged to write on for bread. The whole French academy was pensioned to crush the great Corneille. Racine,

* Martinelli, in his Edition of the Decamerone, cited in the introduction to Sidney's Discourses on Government, Edition of 1751, p. 34.

after living to see his finest pieces derided as cold and worthless, died of a broken heart. The divine genius of Shakspeare raised him to no higher rank than that of a subaltern actor in his own, and Ben Johnson's plays. The immortal Chancellor was sacrificed to the preservation of a worthless minion, and is said, (false-ly I trust,) to have begged a cup of beer in his old age, and begged it in vain. The most valuable of the pieces of Selden were written in that famous resort of great minds, the tower of London. Milton, surprised by want in his infirm old age, sold the first production of the human mind for five pounds. The great boast of English philosophy was expelled from his place in Oxford, and kept in banishment, 'the king having been given to understand,' to use the words of Lord Sunderland, who ordered the expulsion, 'that one Locke has, upon several occasions, behaved himself very factiously against the government.' Dryden sacrificed his genius to the spur of immediate want. Otway was choked with a morsel of bread, too ravenously swallowed after a long fast. Johnson was taken to prison for a debt of five shillings; and Burke petitioned for a Professorship at Glasgow and was denied. When we survey these facts and the innumerable others, of which these are not even an adequate specimen, we may perhaps conclude that, in whatever way the arbitrary governments of Europe have encouraged letters, it has not been in that of a steady cheering patronage. We may think there is abundant reason to acknowledge, that the ancient lesson is confirmed by modern experience, and that popular institutions are most propitious to the full and prosperous growth of intellectual excellence.

If the perfectly organized system of liberty, which here prevails, be thus favorable to intellectual progress, various other conditions of our national existence are not less so, particularly the extension of one language, government and character, over so vast a space as the United States of America. Hitherto, in

the main, the world has seen but two forms of social existence, free governments in small states, and arbitrary governments in large ones. Though various shades of both have appeared, at different times, in the world, yet on the whole, the political ingenuity of man has never found out the mode of extending liberal institutions beyond small districts, or of governing large empires, by any other means, than the visible demonstration and exercise of absolute power. The effect in either case has been unpropitious to the growth of intellectual excellence. Free institutions, though favorable to the growth of intellectual excellence, are not the only thing needed. The wandering savage is free, but most of the powers of his mind lie dormant, under the severe privations of a barbarous life. An infant colony, on a distant coast, may be free, but for want of the necessary mental aliment and excitement, may be unable to rise above the limits of material existence. In order then that free institutions may have their full and entire effect, in producing the highest attainable degree of intellectual improvement, they require to be established in an extensive region, and over a numerous people. This constitutes a state of society entirely new among men; a vast empire whose institutions are wholly popular. While we experience the genial influence of those principles, which belong to all free states, and in proportion as they are free; independence of thought, and the right of expressing it; we are to feel in this country, we and those who succeed us, all that excitement, which, in various ways, arises from the reciprocal action upon each other of the parts of a great empire. Literature, as has been partly hinted, is the voice of the age and the state. The character, energy and resources of the country, are reflected and imaged forth in the conceptions of its great minds. They are the organs of the time; they speak not their own language, they scarce think their own thoughts; but under an impulse like the prophetic enthusiasm of old, they must feel and

utter the sentiments, which society inspires. They do not create, they obey the Spirit of the Age; the serene and beautiful spirit descended from the highest heaven of liberty, who laughs at our little preconceptions, and, with the breath of his mouth, sweeps before him the men and the nations, that cross his path. By an unconscious instinct, the mind in the strong action of its powers, adapts itself to the number and complexion of the other minds, with which it is to enter into communion or conflict. As the voice falls into the key, which is suited to the space to be filled, the mind, in the various exercises of its creative faculties, strives with curious search for that master-note, which will awaken a vibration from the surrounding community, and which, if it do not find, it is itself too often struck dumb.

For this reason, from the moment in the destiny of nations, that they descend from their culminating point and begin to decline, from that moment the voice of creative genius is hushed. and at best, the age of criticism, learning and imitation, succeeds. When Greece ceased to be independent, the forum and the stage became mute. The patronage of Macedonian, Alexandrian and Pergamean princes was lavished in vain. They could not woo the healthy muses of Hellas, from the cold mountain tops of Greece, to dwell in their gilded halls. Nay, though the fall of greatness, the decay of beauty, the waste of strength, and the wreck of power, have ever been among the favorite themes of the pensive muse, yet not a poet arose in Greece to chant her own elegy; and it is after near three centuries, and from Cicero and Sulpicius, that we catch the first notes of pious and pathetic lamentation over the fallen land of the arts. The freedom and genius of a country are invariably gathered into a common tomb, and there

Can only strangers breathe,
The name of that which was beneath.

It is when we reflect on this power of an auspicious future, that we realize the prospect, which smiles upon the intellect of America. It may justly be accounted the great peculiarity of ancient days, compared with modern, that in antiquity there was, upon the whole, but one civilized and literary nation at a time in the world. Art and refinement followed in the train of political ascendancy, from the east to Greece and from Greece to Rome. In the modern world, under the influence of various causes, intellectual, political and moral, civilization has been diffused throughout the greater part of Europe and America. Now mark a singular fatality as regards the connexion of this enlarged and diffused civilization, with the progress of letters and the excitement to intellectual exertion in any given state. Instead of one sole country, as in antiquity, where the arts and refinements find a home, there are, in modern Europe, seven or eight equally entitled to the general name of cultivated nations, and in each of which some minds of the first order have appeared. And yet, by the unfortunate multiplication of languages, an obstacle all but insuperable has been thrown in the way of the free progress of genius, in its triumphant course, from region to region. The muses of Shakspeare and Milton, of Camoens, of Lope de Vega, and Calderon, of Corneille and Racine, of Dante and Tasso, of Gœthe and Schiller, are strangers to each other.

This evil was so keenly felt in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, that the Latin language was widely adopted as a dialect common to scholars. We see men like Luther, Calvin and Erasmus, Bacon, Grotius and Thuanus, who could scarce have written a line without exciting the admiration of their contemporaries, driven to the use of a tongue, which none but the learned could understand. For the sake of addressing the scholars of other countries, these great men, and others like them, in many of their writings, were obliged to cut themselves off, from all sympathy with the

mass of those, whom as patriots they must have wished most to instruct. In works of pure science and learned criticism, this is of less consequence; for being independent of sentiment, it matters less how remote from real life the symbols, in which their ideas are conveyed. But when we see a writer like Milton, who, more than any other, whom England ever produced, was a master of the music of his native tongue, who, besides all the eloquence of thought and imagery, knew better than any other man how to clothe them, according to his own beautiful expression,

In notes, with many a winding bout
Of linked sweetness, long drawn out,
With wanton heed and giddy cunning,
The melting voice through mazes running,
Untwisting all the chains that tie
The hidden soul of harmony ;

when we see a master of English eloquence thus gifted choosing a dead language, the dialect of the closet, a tongue without an echo from the hearts of the people, as the vehicle of his defence of that people's rights; asserting the cause of Englishmen in the language, as it may be truly called, of Cicero; we can only measure the incongruity, by reflecting what Cicero would himself have thought and felt, if called to defend the cause of Roman freedom, not in the language of the Roman citizen, but in that of the Chaldeans or Assyrians, or some people still farther remote in the history of the world. There is little doubt that the prevalence of the Latin language among modern scholars, was a great cause not only of the slow progress of letters among the lower ranks, but of the stiffness and constraint formerly visible in the vernacular style of most scholars themselves. That the reformation in religion advanced with such rapidity, is doubtless, in no small degree, to be attributed to the translation of the scriptures, and the use of liturgies in the modern tongues. While the preservation in England of a strange language—I

will not sin against the majesty of Rome by calling it Latin—in legal acts, down to so late a period as 1730, may be one cause, that the practical forms of administering justice have not been made to keep pace with the popular views, that have triumphed in other things. With the erection of popular institutions under Cromwell, among various other legal improvements,* very many of which were speedily adopted by our plain dealing forefathers, the records of the law were ordered to be kept in English; ‘A novelty,’ says the learned commentator on the English laws, ‘which at the restoration was no longer continued, practisers having found it very difficult to express themselves so concisely or significantly in any other language but Latin;† an argument for the use of that language, whose soundness it must be left to clients to estimate.

Nor are the other remedies more efficacious, which have been attempted for the evil of a multiplicity of tongues. Something is done by translations and something by the acquisition of foreign languages. But that no effectual transfusion of the higher literature of a country can take place, in the way of translation, is matter of notoriety; and it is a remark of one of the few, who could have courage to make such a remark, Madame de Stael, that it is impossible fully to comprehend the literature of a foreign tongue. The general preference given to Young’s Night Thoughts and Ossian, over all the other English poets, in many parts of the continent of Europe, seems to confirm the justice of the observation. There is, indeed, an influence of exalted genius co-extensive with the earth. Something of its power will be felt, in spite of the obstacles of different languages, remote regions, and other times. But its true empire, its lawful sway, are at home and over the hearts of kindred men. A charm, which nothing can

* See a number of them in Lord Somers’ Tracts, vol. i.

† Blackstone’s Commentaries, vol. iii. 422.

borrow, nothing counterfeit, nothing dispense with, resides in the simple sound of our mother tongue. Not analyzed, nor reasoned upon, it unites the earliest associations of life with the maturest conceptions of the understanding. The heart is willing to open all its avenues to the language, in which its infantile caprices were soothed; and by the curious efficacy of the principal association, it is this echo from the feeble dawn of life, which gives to eloquence much of its manly power, and to poetry much of its divine charm. This feeling of the music of our native language is the first intellectual capacity that is developed in children, and when by age or misfortune,

‘The ear is all unstrung,
Still, still, it loves the lowland tongue.’

What a noble prospect is opened in this connexion for the circulation of thought and sentiment in our country! Instead of that multiplicity of dialect, by which mental communication and sympathy are cut off in the old world, a continually expanding realm is opened and opening to American intellect, in the community of our language, throughout the wide spread settlements of this continent. The enginery of the press will here, for the first time, be brought to bear, with all its mighty power, on the minds and hearts of men, in exchanging intelligence, and circulating opinions, unchecked by the diversity of language, over an empire more extensive than the whole of Europe.

And this community of language, all important as it is, is but a part of the manifold brotherhood, which unites and will unite the growing millions of America. In Europe, the work of international alienation, which begins in diversity of language, is carried on and consummated by diversity of government, institutions, national descent, and national prejudices. In crossing the principal rivers, channels and mountains, in that quarter of the world, you are met, not only by new

tongues, but by new forms of government, new associations of ancestry, new and generally hostile objects of national boast and gratulation. While on the other hand, throughout the vast regions included within the limits of our republic, not only the same language, but the same laws, the same national government, the same republican institutions, and a common ancestral association prevail, and will diffuse themselves. Mankind will here exist, move, and act in a kindred mass, such as was never before congregated on the earth's surface. The necessary consequences of such a cause overpower the imagination. What would be the effect on the intellectual state of Europe, at the present day, were all her nations and tribes amalgamated into one vast empire, speaking the same tongue, united into one political system, and that a free one, and opening one broad unobstructed pathway for the interchange of thought and feeling, from Lisbon to Archangel! If effects are to bear a constant proportion to their causes; if the energy of thought is to be commensurate with the masses which prompt it, and the masses it must penetrate; if eloquence is to grow in fervor with the weight of the interests it is to plead, and the grandeur of the assemblies it addresses; if efforts rise with the glory that is to crown them; in a word, if the faculties of the human mind, as we firmly believe, are capable of tension and achievement altogether indefinite;

Nil actum reputans, dum quid superesset agendum,

then it is not too much to say, that a new era will open on the intellectual world, in the fulfilment of our country's prospects. By the sovereign efficacy of the partition of powers between the national and state governments, in virtue of which the national government is relieved from all the odium of internal administration, and the state governments are spared the conflicts of foreign politics. all bounds seem removed from

the possible extension of our country, but the geographical limits of the continent. Instead of growing cumbrous, as it increases in size, there never was a moment since the first settlement of Virginia, when the political system of America moved with so firm and bold a step as at the present day. If there is any faith in our country's auspices, this great continent, in no remote futurity, will be filled up with a homogeneous population; with the mightiest kindred people known in history; our language will acquire an extension, which no other ever possessed; and the empire of the mind, with nothing to resist its sway, will attain an expansion, of which as yet we can but partly conceive. The vision is too magnificent to be fully borne; a mass of two or three hundred millions, not chained to the oar like the same number in China, by a brutalizing despotism, but held in their several orbits of nation and state, by the grand representative attraction; bringing to bear on every point the concentrated energy of such a host; calling into competition so many minds; uniting into one great national feeling the hearts of so many freemen; all to be guided, persuaded, moved and swayed, by the master spirits of the time!

Let me not be told, that this is a chimerical imagination of a future indefinitely removed; let me not hear repeated the ribaldry of an anticipation of 'two thousand years'—of a vision that requires for its fulfilment a length of ages beyond the grasp of any reasonable computation. It is the last point of peculiarity in our condition, to which I invite your attention, as affecting the progress of intellect in the country, that it is growing with a rapidity hitherto entirely without example in the world. For the two hundred years of our existence, the population has doubled itself, in periods of less than a quarter of a century. In the infancy of the country, and while our numbers remained within the limits of a youthful colony, a progress so rapid as this, however important in the prin-

ciple of growth disclosed, was not yet a circumstance strongly to fix the attention. But arrived at a population of ten millions, it is a fact of the most overpowering interest, that, within less than twenty-five years, these ten millions will have swelled to twenty; that the younger members of this audience will be citizens of the largest civilized state on earth; that in a few years more than one century, the American population will equal the fabulous numbers of the Chinese empire. This rate of increase has already produced the most striking phenomena. A few weeks after the opening of the Revolutionary drama at Lexington, the momentous intelligence, ~~that~~ the first blood was spilt, reached a party of hunters beyond the Alleghanies, who had wandered far into the western wilderness. In prophetic commemoration of the glorious event, they gave the name of Lexington to the spot of their encampment in the woods. That spot is now the capital of a state larger than Massachusetts; it is the seat of a university as fully attended as our venerable *Alma Mater*; nay, more, it is the capital of a state from which, in the language of one of her own citizens, whose eloquence is the ornament of his country, the tide of emigration still farther westward is more fully pouring than from any other in the union.*

I need not say, that this astonishing increase of numbers, is by no means the limit and measure of our country's growth. Arts, agriculture, all the great national interests, all the sources of national wealth, are growing in a ratio still more rapid. In our cities the intensest activity is apparent; in the country every spring of prosperity, from the smallest improvement in husbandry to the construction of canals across the continent, is in vigorous action; abroad our vessels are beating the pathways of the ocean white; on the inland frontier, the nation is journeying on, like a healthy giant, with a pace more like romance than reality.

* Mr. Clay's late speech on Internal Improvement.

These facts, and thousands like them, form one of those peculiarities in our country's condition, which will have the most powerful influence on the minds of its children. The population of several states of Europe has reached its term. In some it is declining, in some stationary, and in the most prosperous, under the extraordinary *stimulus* of the last part of the eighteenth century, it doubles itself but about once in seventy-five years. In consequence of this, the process of social transmission is heavy and slow. Men, not adventitiously favored, come late into life, and the best years of existence are exhausted in languishing competition. The man grows up, and in the stern language of one of their most renowned economists,* finds no cover laid for him at Nature's table. The smallest official provision is a boon, at which great minds are not ashamed to grasp; the assurance of the most frugal subsistence commands the brightest talents and the most laborious studies; poor wages pay for the unremitted labor of the most curious hands; and it is the smallest part of the population only that is within the reach even of these humiliating springs of action. We need not labor to contrast this state of things with the teeming growth and noble expansion of all our institutions and resources. Instead of being shut up, as it were, in the prison of a stationary, or a very slowly progressive community, the emulation of our countrymen is drawn out and tempted on, by a horizon constantly receding before them. New nations of kindred freemen are springing up in successive periods, shorter even than the active portion of the life of man. 'While we spend our time,' says Burke on this topic, 'in deliberating on the mode of governing two millions in America, we shall find we have millions more to manage.'† Many individuals are in this house, who were arrived at years of discretion when these words of Burke were uttered, and the two millions, which Great Britain was

* Mr. Malthus.

† Speech on Conciliation with America, March 22, 1775.

then to manage, have grown into ten, exceedingly unmanageable. The most affecting view of this subject is, that it puts it in the power of the wise, and good, and great to gather, while they live, the ripest fruits of their labors. Where, in human history is to be found a contrast like that, which the last fifty years have crowded into the lives of those favored men, who raising their hands or their voices, when our little bands were led out to the perilous conflict with one of the most powerful empires on earth, have lived to be crowned with the highest honors of the Republic, which they established? Honor to their gray hairs, and peace and serenity to the evening of their eventful days!

Though it may never again be the fortune of our country to bring within the compass of half a century a contrast so dazzling as this, yet in its grand and steady progress, the career of duty and usefulness will be run by all its children, under a constantly increasing *stimulus*. The voice, which, in the morning of life, shall awaken the patriotic sympathy of the land, will be echoed back by a community, incalculably swelled in all its proportions, before it shall be hushed in death. The writer, by whom the noble features of our scenery shall be sketched with a glowing pencil, the traits of our romantic early history gathered up with filial zeal, and the peculiarities of our character seized with delicate perception, cannot mount so entirely and rapidly to success, but that ten years will add new millions to the numbers of his readers. The American statesman, the orator, whose voice is already heard in its supremacy, from Florida to Maine, whose intellectual empire already extends beyond the limits of Alexander's, has yet new states and new nations starting into being, the willing tributaries to his sway.

This march of our population westward has been attended with consequences in some degree novel, in the history of the human mind. It is a fact, somewhat difficult of explanation, that the refinement of the ancient nations seemed almost wholly devoid of an

elastic and expansive principle. The arts of Greece were enchained to her islands and her coasts; they did not penetrate the interior. The language and literature of Athens were as unknown, to the north of Pindus, at a distance of two hundred miles from the capital of Grecian refinement, as they were in Scythia. Thrace, whose mountain tops may almost be seen from the porch of the temple of Minerva at Sunium, was the proverbial abode of barbarism. Though the colonies of Greece were scattered on the coasts of Italy, of France, of Spain, and of Africa, no extension of their population toward the interior took place, and the arts did not penetrate beyond the walls of the cities, where they were cultivated. How different is the picture of the diffusion of the arts and improvement of civilization, from the coast to the interior of America! Population advances westward with a rapidity, which numbers may describe indeed, but cannot represent, with any vivacity, to the mind. The wilderness, which one year is impassable, is traversed the next by the caravans of the industrious emigrants, who go to follow the setting sun, with the language, the institutions, and the arts of civilized life. It is not the irruption of wild barbarians, come to visit the wrath of God on a degenerate empire; it is not the inroad of disciplined banditti, marshalled by the intrigues of ministers and kings. It is the human family led out to possess its broad patrimony. The states and nations, which are springing up in the valley of the Missouri, are bound to us, by the dearest ties of a common language, a common government, and a common descent. Before New England can look with coldness on their rising myriads, she must forget that some of the best of her own blood is beating in their veins; that her hardy children, with their axes on their shoulders, have been literally among the pioneers in this march of humanity; that young as she is, she has become the mother of populous states. What generous mind would sacrifice to a selfish preservation of local preponderance, the de-

light of beholding civilized nations rising up in the desert; and the language, the manners, the institutions, to which he has been reared, carried with his household gods to the foot of the Rocky Mountains? Who can forget that this extension of our territorial limits is the extension of the empire of all we hold dear; of our laws, of our character, of the memory of our ancestors, of the great achievements in our history? Whithersoever the sons of the thirteen states shall wander, to southern or western climes, they will send back their hearts to the rocky shores, the battle fields, and the intrepid counsels of the Atlantic coast. These are placed beyond the reach of vicissitude. They have become already, matter of history, of poetry, of eloquence:

The love, where death has set his seal,
Nor age can chill, nor rival steal,
Nor falsehood disavow.

Divisions may spring up, ill blood arise, parties be formed, and interests may seem to clash; but the great bonds of the nation are linked to what is passed. The deeds of the great men, to whom this country owes its origin and growth, are a patrimony, I know, of which its children will never deprive themselves. As long as the Mississippi and the Missouri shall flow, those men and those deeds will be remembered on their banks. The sceptre of government may go where it will; but that of patriotic feeling can never depart from Judah. In all that mighty region, which is drained by the Missouri and its tributary streams—the valley coextensive with the temperate zone—will there be, as long as the name of America shall last, a father, that will not take his children on his knee and recount to them the events of the twentieth of December, the nineteenth of April, the seventeenth of June, and the fourth of July?

This then is the theatre, on which the intellect of

America is to appear, and such the motives to its exertion; such the mass to be influenced by its energies, such the crowd to witness its efforts, such the glory to crown its success. If I err, in this happy vision of my country's fortunes, I thank God for an error so animating. If this be false, may I never know the truth. Never may you, my friends, be under any other feeling, than that a great, a growing, an immeasurably expanding country is calling upon you for your best services. The name and character of your *Alma Mater* have already been carried by some of our brethren thousands of miles from her venerable walls; and thousands of miles still farther westward, the communities of kindred men are fast gathering, whose minds and hearts will act in sympathy with yours.

The most powerful motives call on us as scholars for those efforts, which our common country demands of all her children. Most of us are of that class, who owe whatever of knowledge has shone into our minds, to the free and popular institutions of our native land. (There are few of us, who may not be permitted to boast, that we have been reared in an honest poverty or a frugal competence, and owe every thing to those means of education, which are equally open to all.) We are summoned to new energy and zeal by the high nature of the experiment we are appointed in Providence to make, and the grandeur of the theatre on which it is to be performed. When the old world afforded no longer any hope, it pleased heaven to open this last refuge of humanity. (The attempt has begun, and is going on, far from foreign corruption, on the broadest scale, and under the most benignant auspices) and it certainly rests with us to solve the great problem in human society, to settle, and that forever, the momentous question—whether mankind can be trusted with a purely popular system? One might almost think, without extravagance, that the departed wise and good of all places and times, are looking down from their happy seats to witness what shall now

be done by us; that they who lavished their treasures and their blood of old, who labored and suffered, who spake and wrote, who fought and perished, in the one great cause of freedom and truth, are now hanging from their orbs on high, over the last solemn experiment of humanity. As I have wandered over the spots, once the scene of their labors, and mused among the prostrate columns of their Senate Houses and Forums, I have seemed almost to hear a voice from the tombs of departed ages; from the sepulchres of the nations, which died before the sight. They exhort us, they adjure us to be faithful to our trust. They implore us, by the long trials of struggling humanity, by the blessed memory of the departed; by the dear faith, which has been plighted by pure hands, to the holy cause of truth and man; by the awful secrets of the prison houses, where the sons of freedom have been immured; by the noble heads which have been brought to the block; by the wrecks of time, by the eloquent ruins of nations, they conjure us not to quench the light which is rising on the world. Greece cries to us, by the convulsed lips of her poisoned, dying Demosthenes; and Rome pleads with us in the mute persuasion of her mangled Tully. [They address us each and all in the glorious language of Milton, to one, who might have canonized his memory in the hearts of the friends of liberty, but who did most shamefully betray the cause, 'Reverere tantam de te expectationem, spem patriæ de te unicam. Reverere vultus et vulnera tot fortium virorum, quotquot pro libertate tam strenue decertarunt, manes etiam eorum qui in ipso certamine occubuerunt. Reverere exterarum quoque civitatum existimationem de te atque sermones; quantas res de libertate nostra tam fortiter parta, de nostra republica tam gloriose exorta sibi polliceantur; quæ si tam cito quasi aborta evanuerit, profecto nihil æque dedecorosum huic genti atque periculosum fuerit.'*]

* Milton's Defensio Secunda.

~~Yes, my friends,~~ such is the exhortation which calls on us to exert our powers, to employ our time, and consecrate our labors in the cause of our native land. When we engage in that solemn study, the history of our race, when we survey the progress of man, from his cradle in the east to these last limits of his wandering; when we behold him forever flying westward from civil and religious thralldom, bearing his household gods over mountains and seas, seeking rest and finding none, but still pursuing the flying bow of promise, to the glittering hills which it spans in Hesperian climes, we cannot but exclaim with Bishop Berkeley, the generous prelate of England, who bestowed his benefactions, as well as blessings, on our country,

Westward the star of Empire takes its way ;
The four first acts already past,
The fifth shall close the drama with the day ;
Time's noblest offspring is the last.

In that high romance, if romance it be, in which the great minds of antiquity sketched the fortunes of the ages to come, they pictured to themselves a favored region beyond the ocean, a land of equal laws and happy men. The primitive poets beheld it in the islands of the blest; the Doric bards surveyed it in the Hyperborean regions; the sage of the academy placed it in the lost Atlantis; and even the sterner spirit of Seneca could discern a fairer abode of humanity, in distant regions then unknown. We look back upon these uninspired predictions, and almost recoil from the obligation they imply. By us must these fair visions be realized, by us must be fulfilled these high promises, which burst in trying hours from the longing hearts of the champions of truth. There are no more continents or worlds to be revealed; Atlantis hath arisen from the ocean, the farthest Thule is reached, there are no more retreats beyond the sea, no more discoveries, no more hopes. Here then a mighty work is to be fulfilled, or never, by the race of mortals.

The man, who looks with tenderness on the sufferings of good men in other times; the descendant of the pilgrims, who cherishes the memory of his fathers; the patriot, who feels an honest glow at the majesty of the system of which he is a member; the scholar, who beholds with rapture the long sealed book of unprejudiced truth expanded to all to read; these are they, by whom these auspices are to be accomplished. Yes, brethren, it is by the intellect of the country, that the mighty mass is to be inspired; that its parts are to communicate and sympathize, its bright progress to be adorned with becoming refinements, its strong sense uttered, its character reflected, its feelings interpreted to its own children, to other regions, and to after ages.

— Meantime the years are rapidly passing away and gathering importance in their course. With the present year will be completed the half century from that most important era in human history, the commencement of our revolutionary war. The jubilee of our national existence is at hand. The space of time, that has elapsed from that momentous date, has laid down in the dust, which the blood of many of them had already hallowed, most of the great men to whom, under Providence, we owe our national existence and privileges. A few still survive among us, to reap the rich fruits of their labors and sufferings; and One* has yielded himself to the united voice of a people, and returned in his age, to receive the gratitude of the nation, to whom he devoted his youth. — It is recorded on the pages of American history, that when this friend of our country applied to our commissioners at Paris, in 1776, for a passage in the first ship they should despatch to America, they were obliged to answer him, (so low and abject was then our dear native land,) that they possessed not the means nor the credit sufficient for providing a single vessel, in all the ports of France.

* Major General La Fayette, who was present at the delivery of this oration.—COMPILER.

Then, exclaimed the youthful hero, 'I will provide my own;' and it is a literal fact, that when all America was too poor to offer him so much as a passage to our shores, he left, in his tender youth, the bosom of home, of happiness, of wealth, of rank, to plunge in the dust and blood of our inauspicious struggle.

— Welcome, friend of our fathers, to our shores!

Happy are our eyes that behold those venerable features. Enjoy a triumph, such as never conqueror or monarch enjoyed, the assurance, that throughout America, there is not a bosom, which does not beat with joy and gratitude at the sound of your name. You have already met and saluted, or will soon meet, the few that remain of the ardent patriots, prudent counsellors, and brave warriors, with whom you were associated in achieving our liberty. But you have looked round in vain for the faces of many, who would have lived years of pleasure on a day like this, with their old companion in arms and brother in peril. Lincoln, and Greene, and Knox, and Hamilton, are gone; the heroes of Saratoga and Yorktown have fallen, before the only foe they could not meet. Above all, the first of heroes and of men, the friend of your youth, the more than friend of his country, rests in the bosom of the soil he redeemed. On the banks of his Potomac, he lies in glory and peace. You will revisit the hospitable shades of Mount Vernon, but him whom you venerated as we did, you will not meet at its door. His voice of consolation, which reached you in the Austrian dungeons, cannot now break its silence, to bid you welcome to his own roof. But the grateful children of America will bid you welcome, in his name. Welcome, thrice welcome to our shores; and whithersoever throughout the limits of the continent your course shall take you, the ear that hears you shall bless you, the eye that sees you shall bear witness to you, and every tongue exclaim, with heartfelt joy, — welcome, welcome La Fayette! —

AN ADDRESS

DELIVERED AT THE LAYING OF THE CORNER STONE OF
THE BUNKER HILL MONUMENT,

BY DANIEL WEBSTER.

.....

THIS uncounted multitude before me, and around me, proves the feeling which the occasion has excited. These thousands of human faces, glowing with sympathy and joy, and, from the impulses of a common gratitude, turned reverently to heaven, in this spacious temple of the firmament, proclaim that the day, the place, and the purpose of our assembling have made a deep impression on our hearts.

If, indeed, there be any thing in local association fit to affect the mind of man, we need not strive to repress the emotions which agitate us here. We are among the sepulchres of our fathers. We are on ground, distinguished by their valor, their constancy, and the shedding of their blood. We are here, not to fix an uncertain date in our annals, nor to draw into notice an obscure and unknown spot. If our humble purpose had never been conceived, if we ourselves had never been born, the 17th of June 1775 would have been a day on which all subsequent history would have poured its light, and the eminence where we stand, a point of attraction to the eyes of successive generations. But we are Americans. We live in what may be called the early age of this great continent; and we know that our posterity, through all time, are here to suffer and enjoy the allotments of humanity. We see before us a probable train of great events; we know that our own fortunes have been happily cast; and it is natural, therefore, that we should be moved by the contemplation of occurrences which

have guided our destiny before many of us were born, and settled the condition in which we should pass that portion of our existence, which God allows to men on earth.

We do not read even of the discovery of this continent, without feeling something of a personal interest in the event; without being reminded how much it has affected our own fortunes, and our own existence. It is more impossible for us, therefore, than for others, to contemplate with unaffected minds that interesting, I may say, that most touching and pathetic scene, when the great Discoverer of America stood on the deck of his shattered bark, the shades of night falling on the sea, yet no man sleeping; tossed on the billows of an unknown ocean, yet the stronger billows of alternate hope and despair tossing his own troubled thoughts; extending forward his harassed frame, straining westward his anxious and eager eyes, till Heaven at last granted him a moment of rapture and ecstasy, in blessing his vision with the sight of the unknown world.

Nearer to our times, more closely connected with our fates, and therefore still more interesting to our feelings and affections, is the settlement of our own country by colonists from England. We cherish every memorial of these worthy ancestors; we celebrate their patience and fortitude; we admire their daring enterprise; we teach our children to venerate their piety; and we are justly proud of being descended from men, who have set the world an example of founding civil institutions on the great and united principles of human freedom and human knowledge. To us, their children, the story of their labors and sufferings can never be without its interest. We shall not stand unmoved on the shore of Plymouth, while the sea continues to wash it; nor will our brethren in another early and ancient colony, forget the place of its first establishment, till their river shall cease to flow by it. No vigor of youth, no maturity of manhood.

Ag,

will lead the nation to forget the spots where its infancy was cradled and defended.

But the great event, in the history of the continent, which we are now met here to commemorate; that prodigy of modern times, at once the wonder and the blessing of the world, is the American Revolution. In a day of extraordinary prosperity and happiness, of high national honor, distinction, and power, we are brought together, in this place, by our love of country, by our admiration of exalted character, by our gratitude for signal services and patriotic devotion.

The society, whose organ I am, was formed for the purpose of rearing some honorable and durable monument to the memory of the early friends of American Independence. They have thought, that for this subject no time could be more propitious, than the present prosperous and peaceful period; that no place could claim preference over this memorable spot; and that no day could be more auspicious to the undertaking, than the anniversary of the battle which was here fought. The foundation of that monument we have now laid. With solemnities suited to the occasion, with prayers to Almighty God for his blessing, and in the midst of this cloud of witnesses, we have begun the work. We trust it will be prosecuted; and that springing from a broad foundation, rising high in massive solidity and unadorned grandeur, it may remain, as long as Heaven permits the work of man to last, a fit emblem, both of the events in memory of which it is raised, and of the gratitude of those who have reared it.

We know, indeed, that the record of illustrious actions is most safely deposited in the universal remembrance of mankind. We know, that if we could cause this structure to ascend, not only till it reached the skies, but till it pierced them, its broad surfaces could still contain but part of that, which, in an age of knowledge, hath already been spread over the earth, and which history charges itself with making known to all

future times. We know, that no inscription on en-
tablatures less broad than the earth itself, can carry
information of the events we commemorate, where it
has not already gone; and that no structure, which
shall not outlive the duration of letters and knowledge
among men, can prolong the memorial. But our ob-
ject is, by this edifice to show our own deep sense of
the value and importance of the achievements of our
ancestors; and, by presenting this work of gratitude
to the eye, to keep alive similar sentiments, and to
foster a constant regard for the principles of the Revo-
lution. Human beings are composed not of reason
only, but of imagination also, and sentiment; and that
is neither wasted nor misapplied, which is appropriat-
ed to the purpose of giving right direction to senti-
ments, and opening proper springs of feeling in the
heart. Let it not be supposed that our object is to
perpetuate national hostility, or even to cherish a mere
military spirit. It is higher, purer, nobler. We con-
secrate our work to the spirit of national independ-
ence, and we wish that the light of peace may rest
upon it forever. We rear a memorial of our convic-
tion of that unmeasured benefit, which has been con-
ferred on our own land, and of the happy influences,
which have been produced, by the same events, on the
general interests of mankind. We come, as Ameri-
cans, to mark a spot, which must forever be dear to us
and our posterity. We wish, that whosoever, in all
coming time, shall turn his eye hither, may behold
that the place is not undistinguished, where the first
great battle of the Revolution was fought. We wish,
that this structure may proclaim the magnitude and
importance of that event, to every class and every age.
We wish, that infancy may learn the purpose of its
erection from maternal lips, and that weary and with-
ered age may behold it, and be solaced by the recollec-
tions which it suggests. We wish, that labor may
look up here, and be proud, in the midst of its toil.
We wish, that, in those days of disaster, which, as

they come on all nations, must be expected to come on us also, desponding patriotism may turn its eyes hitherward, and be assured that the foundations of our national power still stand strong. We wish, that this column, rising towards heaven among the pointed spires of so many temples dedicated to God, may contribute also to produce, in all minds, a pious feeling of dependence and gratitude. We wish, finally, that the last object on the sight of him who leaves his native shore, and the first to gladden his who revisits it, may be something which shall remind him of the liberty and the glory of his country. Let it rise, till it meet the sun in his coming; let the earliest light of the morning gild it, and parting day linger and play on its summit.

We live in a most extraordinary age. Events so various and so important, that they might crowd and distinguish centuries, are, in our times, compressed within the compass of a single life. When has it happened that history has had so much to record, in the same term of years, as since the 17th of June, 1775? Our own Revolution, which, under other circumstances, might itself have been expected to occasion a war of half a century, has been achieved; twenty-four sovereign and independent states erected; and a general government established over them, so safe, so wise, so free, so practical, that we might well wonder its establishment should have been accomplished so soon, were it not far the greater wonder that it should have been established at all. Two or three millions of people have been augmented to twelve; and the great forests of the West prostrated beneath the arm of successful industry; and the dwellers on the banks of the Ohio and the Mississippi, become the fellow-citizens and neighbors of those who cultivate the hills of New-England. We have a commerce, that leaves no sea unexplored; navies, which take no law from superior force; revenues, adequate to all the exigencies of government, almost without

taxation; and peace with all nations, founded on equal rights and mutual respect.

Europe, within the same period, has been agitated by a mighty revolution, which, while it has been felt in the individual condition and happiness of almost every man, has shaken to the centre her political fabric, and dashed against one another thrones, which had stood tranquil for ages. On this, our continent, our own example has been followed; and colonies have sprung up to be nations. Unaccustomed sounds of liberty and free government have reached us from beyond the track of the sun; and at this moment the dominion of European power, in this continent, from the place where we stand to the south pole, is annihilated forever.

In the mean time, both in Europe and America, such has been the general progress of knowledge; such the improvements in legislation, in commerce, in the arts, in letters, and above all, in liberal ideas, and the general spirit of the age, that the whole world seems changed.

Yet, notwithstanding that this is but a faint abstract of the things which have happened since the day of the battle of Bunker Hill, we are but fifty years removed from it; and we now stand here, to enjoy all the blessings of our own condition, and to look abroad on the brightened prospects of the world, while we hold still among us some of those, who were active agents in the scenes of 1775, and who are now here, from every quarter of New England, to visit, once more, and under circumstances so affecting, I had almost said so overwhelming, this renowned theatre of their courage and patriotism.

Venerable men! you have come down to us, from a former generation. Heaven has bounteously lengthened out your lives, that you might behold this joyous day. You are now, where you stood, fifty years ago, this very hour, with your brothers and your neighbors, shoulder to shoulder, in the strife for your country.

Behold, how altered! The same heavens are indeed over your heads; the same ocean rolls at your feet; but all else, how changed! You hear now no roar of hostile cannon, you see no mixed volumes of smoke and flame rising from burning Charlestown. The ground strewed with the dead and the dying; the impetuous charge; the steady and successful repulse; the loud call to repeated assault; the summoning of all that is manly to repeated resistance; a thousand bosoms freely and fearlessly bared in an instant to whatever of terror there may be in war and death;—all these you have witnessed, but you witness them no more. All is peace. The heights of yonder metropolis, its towers and roofs, which you then saw filled with wives and children and countrymen in distress and terror, and looking with unutterable emotions for the issue of the combat, have presented you to-day with the sight of its whole happy population, come out to welcome and greet you with a universal jubilee. Yonder proud ships, by a felicity of position appropriately lying at the foot of this mount, and seeming fondly to cling around it, are not means of annoyance to you, but your country's own means of distinction and defence. All is peace; and God has granted you this sight of your country's happiness, ere you slumber in the grave forever. He has allowed you to behold and to partake the reward of your patriotic toils; and he has allowed us, your sons and countrymen, to meet you here, and in the name of the present generation, in the name of your country, in the name of liberty, to thank you!

But, alas! you are not all here! Time and the sword have thinned your ranks. Prescott, Putnam, Stark, Brooks, Read, Pomeroy, Bridge! our eyes seek for you in vain amidst this broken band. You are gathered to your fathers, and live only to your country in her grateful remembrance, and your own bright example. But let us not too much grieve, that you have met the common fate of men. You lived, at least,

long enough to know that your work had been nobly and successfully accomplished. You lived to see your country's independence established, and to sheathe your swords from war. On the light of Liberty you saw arise the light of Peace, like

‘ another morn,
Risen on mid-noon ;’—

and the sky, on which you closed your eyes, was cloudless.

• But—ah!—Him! the first great Martyr in this great cause! Him! the premature victim of his own self-devoting heart! Him! the head of our civil councils, and the destined leader of our military bands; whom nothing brought hither, but the unquenchable fire of his own spirit; Him! cut off by Providence, in the hour of overwhelming anxiety and thick gloom; falling, ere he saw the star of his country rise; pouring out his generous blood, like water, before he knew whether it would fertilize a land of freedom or of bondage! how shall I struggle with the emotions, that stifle the utterance of thy name!—Our poor work may perish; but thine shall endure! This monument may moulder away; the solid ground it rests upon may sink down to a level with the sea; but thy memory shall not fail! Wheresoever among men a heart shall be found, that beats to the transports of patriotism and liberty, its aspirations shall be to claim kindred with thy spirit!

But the scene amidst which we stand does not permit us to confine our thoughts or our sympathies to those fearless spirits, who hazarded or lost their lives on this consecrated spot. We have the happiness to rejoice here in the presence of a most worthy representation of the survivors of the whole Revolutionary Army.

Veterans! you are the remnant of many a well fought field. You bring with you marks of honor

from Trenton and Monmouth, from Yorktown, Camden, Bennington and Saratoga. Veterans of half a century! when in your youthful days, you put every thing at hazard in your country's cause, good as that cause was, and sanguine as youth is, still your fondest hopes did not stretch onward to an hour like this! At a period to which you could not reasonably have expected to arrive; at a moment of national prosperity, such as you could never have foreseen, you are now met, here, to enjoy the fellowship of old soldiers, and to receive the overflowings of a universal gratitude.

But your agitated countenances and your heaving breasts inform me, that even this is not an unmixed joy. I perceive that a tumult of contending feelings rushes upon you. The images of the dead, as well as the persons of the living, throng to your embraces. The scene overwhelms you, and I turn from it. May the Father of all mercies smile upon your declining years, and bless them! And when you shall here have exchanged your embraces; when you shall once more have pressed the hands which have been so often extended to give succor in adversity, or grasped in the exultation of victory; then look abroad into this lovely land, which your young valor defended, and mark the happiness with which it is filled; yea, look abroad into the whole earth, and see what a name you have contributed to give to your country, and what a praise you have added to freedom, and then rejoice in the sympathy and gratitude, which beam upon your last days from the improved condition of mankind.

The occasion does not require of me any particular account of the battle of the 17th of June, nor any detailed narrative of the events which immediately preceded it. These are familiarly known to all. In the progress of the great and interesting controversy, Massachusetts and the town of Boston had become early and marked objects of the displeasure of the British Parliament. This had been manifested, in the

Act for altering the Government of the Province, and in that for shutting up the Port of Boston. Nothing sheds more honor on our early history, and nothing better shows how little the feelings and sentiments of the colonies were known or regarded in England, than the impression which these measures every where produced in America. It had been anticipated, that while the other colonies would be terrified by the severity of the punishment inflicted on Massachusetts, the other seaports would be governed by a mere spirit of gain; and that, as Boston was now cut off from all commerce, the unexpected advantage, which this blow on her was calculated to confer on other towns, would be greedily enjoyed. How miserably such reasoners deceived themselves! How little they knew of the depth, and the strength, and the intenseness of that feeling of resistance to illegal acts of power, which possessed the whole American people! Every where the unworthy boon was rejected with scorn. The fortunate occasion was seized, every where, to show to the whole world, that the colonies were swayed by no local interest, no partial interest, no selfish interest. The temptation to profit by the punishment of Boston was strongest to our neighbors of Salem. Yet Salem was precisely the place, where this miserable proffer was spurned, in a tone of the most lofty self-respect, and the most indignant patriotism. 'We are deeply affected,' said its inhabitants, 'with the sense of our public calamities; but the miseries that are now rapidly hastening on our brethren in the capital of the Province, greatly excite our commiseration. By shutting up the port of Boston, some imagine that the course of trade might be turned hither and to our benefit; but we must be dead to every idea of justice, lost to all feelings of humanity, could we indulge a thought to seize on wealth, and raise our fortunes on the ruin of our suffering neighbors.' These noble sentiments were not confined to our immediate vicinity. In that day of general affection and brotherhood, the blow

given to Boston smote on every patriotic heart; from one end of the country to the other. Virginia and the Carolinas, as well as Connecticut and New Hampshire, felt and proclaimed the cause to be their own. The Continental Congress, then holding its first session in Philadelphia, expressed its sympathy for the suffering inhabitants of Boston, and addresses were received from all quarters, assuring them that the cause was a common one, and should be met by common efforts and common sacrifices. The Congress of Massachusetts responded to these assurances; and in an address to the Congress at Philadelphia, bearing the official signature, perhaps among the last, of the immortal Warren, notwithstanding the severity of its suffering and the magnitude of the dangers which threatened it, it was declared, that this colony 'is ready, at all times, to spend and to be spent in the cause of America.'

But the hour drew nigh, which was to put professions to the proof, and to determine whether the authors of these mutual pledges were ready to seal them in blood. The tidings of Lexington and Concord had no sooner spread, than it was universally felt, that the time was at last come for action. A spirit pervaded all ranks, not transient, not boisterous, but deep, solemn, determined,

' totamque infusa per artus
Mens agitat molem, et magno se corpore miscet.'

War, on their own soil and at their own doors, was indeed, a strange work to the yeomanry of New-England; but their consciences were convinced of its necessity, their country called them to it, and they did not withhold themselves from the perilous trial. The ordinary occupations of life were abandoned; the plough was staid in the unfinished furrow; wives gave up their husbands, and mothers gave up their sons, to the battles of a civil war. Death might come, in hon-

or, on the field; it might come, in disgrace, on the scaffold. For either and for both they were prepared. The sentiment of Quincy was full in their hearts. 'Blandishments,' said that distinguished son of genius and patriotism, 'will not fascinate us nor will threats of a halter intimidate; for, under God, we are determined, that wheresoever, whensoever, or howsoever we shall be called to make our exit, we will die free men.'

The 17th of June saw the four New England colonies standing here, side by side, to triumph or to fall together; and there was with them from that moment to the end of the war, what I hope will remain with them forever, one cause, one country, one heart.

The battle of Bunker Hill was attended with the most important effects beyond its immediate result as a military engagement. It created at once a state of open, public war. There could now be no longer a question of proceeding against individuals, as guilty of treason or rebellion. That fearful crisis was past. The appeal now lay to the sword, and the only question was, whether the spirit and the resources of the people would hold out, till the object should be accomplished. Nor were its general consequences confined to our own country. The previous proceedings of the colonies, their appeals, resolutions, and addresses, had made their cause known to Europe. Without boasting, we may say, that in no age or country, has the public cause been maintained with more force of argument, more power of illustration, or more of that persuasion which excited feeling and elevated principle can alone bestow, than the revolutionary state papers exhibit. These papers will forever deserve to be studied, not only for the spirit which they breathe, but for the ability with which they were written.

To this able vindication of their cause, the colonies had now added a practical and severe proof of their own true devotion to it, and evidence also of the power which they could bring to its support. All now saw, that if America fell, she would not fall without a struggle. Men felt sympathy and regard, as well as surprise,

when they beheld these infant states, remote, unknown, unaided, encounter the power of England, and in the first considerable battle, leave more of their enemies dead on the field, in proportion to the number of combatants, than they had recently known in the wars of Europe.

Information of these events, circulating through Europe, at length reached the ears of one who now hears me. He has not forgotten the emotion, which the fame of Bunker Hill, and the name of Warren, excited in his youthful breast.

Sir, we are assembled to commemorate the establishment of great public principles of liberty, and to do honor to the distinguished dead. The occasion is too severe for eulogy to the living. But, sir, your interesting relation to this country, the peculiar circumstances which surround you and surround us, call on me to express the happiness which we derive from your presence and aid in this solemn commemoration.

Fortunate, fortunate man! with what measure of devotion will you not thank God, for the circumstances of your extraordinary life! You are connected with both hemispheres and with two generations. Heaven saw fit to ordain, that the electric spark of Liberty should be conducted, through you, from the new world to the old: and we, who are now here to perform this duty of patriotism, have all of us long ago received it in charge from our fathers to cherish your name and your virtues. You will account it an instance of your good fortune, sir, that you crossed the seas to visit us at a time which enables you to be present at this solemnity. You now behold the field, the renown of which reached you in the heart of France, and caused a thrill in your ardent bosom. You see the lines of the little redoubt thrown up by the incredible diligence of Prescott; defended, to the last extremity, by his lion-hearted valor; and within which the corner stone of our monument has now taken its position. You see where Warren fell, and where Parker, Gardner, McCleary, Moore, and other early patriots fell with him. Those

who survived that day, and whose lives have been prolonged to the present hour, are now around you. Some of them you have known in the trying scenes of the war. Behold! they now stretch forth their feeble arms to embrace you. Behold! they raise their trembling voices to invoke the blessing of God on you, and yours, forever.

Sir, you have assisted us in laying the foundation of this edifice. You have heard us rehearse, with our feeble commendation, the names of departed patriots. Sir, monuments and eulogy belong to the dead. We give them, this day, to Warren and his associates. On other occasions they have been given to your more immediate companions in arms, to Washington, to Greene, to Gates, Sullivan and Lincoln. Sir, we have become reluctant to grant these, our highest and last honors, further. We would gladly hold them yet back from the little remnant of that immortal band. *Serus in cœlum redeas.* Illustrious as are your merits, yet far, oh, very far, distant be the day, when any inscription shall bear your name, or any tongue pronounce its eulogy!

The leading reflection, to which this occasion seems to invite us, respects the great changes which have happened in the fifty years, since the battle of Bunker Hill was fought. And it peculiarly marks the character of the present age, that, in looking at these changes, and in estimating their effect on our condition, we are obliged to consider, not what has been done in our own country only, but in others also. In these interesting times, while nations are making separate and individual advances in improvement, they make, too, a common progress; like vessels on a common tide, propelled by the gales at different rates, according to their several structure and management, but all moved forward by one mighty current beneath, strong enough to bear onward whatever does not sink beneath it.

A chief distinction of the present day is a community of opinions and knowledge amongst men, in dif-

ferent nations, existing in a degree heretofore unknown. Knowledge has, in our time, triumphed, and is triumphing, over distance, over difference of languages, over diversity of habits, over prejudice, and over bigotry. The civilized and Christian world is fast learning the great lesson, that difference of nation does not imply necessary hostility, and that all contact need not be war. The whole world is becoming a common field for intellect to act in. Energy of mind, genius, power, wheresoever it exists, may speak out in any tongue, and the world will hear it. A great chord of sentiment and feeling runs through two continents, and vibrates over both. Every breeze wafts intelligence from country to country; every wave rolls it; all give it forth, and all in turn receive it. There is a vast commerce of ideas; there are marts and exchanges for intellectual discoveries, and a wonderful fellowship of those individual intelligencies which make up the mind and opinion of the age. Mind is the great lever of all things; human thought is the process by which human ends are ultimately answered; and the diffusion of knowledge, so astonishing in the last half century, has rendered innumerable minds, variously gifted by nature, competent to be competitors, or fellow-workers, on the theatre of intellectual operation.

From these causes, important improvements have taken place in the personal condition of individuals. Generally speaking, mankind are not only better fed, and better clothed, but they are able also to enjoy more leisure; they possess more refinement and more self-respect. A superior tone of education, manners, and habits prevails. This remark, most true in its application to our own country, is also partly true, when applied elsewhere. It is proved by the vastly augmented consumption of those articles of manufacture and of commerce, which contribute to the comforts and the decencies of life; an augmentation which has far outrun the progress of population. And while the

unexampled and almost incredible use of machinery would seem to supply the place of labor, labor still finds its occupation and its reward; so wisely has Providence adjusted men's wants and desires to their condition and their capacity.

Any adequate survey, however, of the progress made in the last half century, in the polite and the mechanic arts, in machinery and manufactures, in commerce and agriculture, in letters and in science, would require volumes. I must abstain wholly from these subjects, and turn, for a moment, to the contemplation of what has been done on the great question of politics and government. This is the master topic of the age; and during the whole fifty years, it has intensely occupied the thoughts of men. The nature of civil government, its ends and uses, have been canvassed and investigated; ancient opinions attacked and defended; new ideas recommended and resisted, by whatever power the mind of man could bring to the controversy. From the closet and the public halls the debate has been transferred to the field; and the world has been shaken by wars of unexampled magnitude, and the greatest variety of fortune. A day of peace has at length succeeded; and now that the strife has subsided, and the smoke cleared away, we may begin to see what has actually been done, permanently changing the state and condition of human society. And without dwelling on particular circumstances, it is most apparent, that, from the beforementioned causes of augmented knowledge and improved individual condition, a real, substantial, and important change has taken place, and is taking place, greatly beneficial, on the whole, to human liberty and human happiness.

The great wheel of political revolution began to move in America. Here its rotation was guarded, regular, and safe. Transferred to the other continent, from unfortunate but natural causes, it received an irregular and violent impulse; it whirled along with a fearful celerity; till at length, like the chariot wheels

in the races of antiquity, it took fire from the rapidity of its own motion, and blazed onward, spreading conflagration and terror around.

We learn from the result of this experiment, how fortunate was our own condition, and how admirably the character of our people was calculated for making the great example of popular governments. The possession of power did not turn the heads of the American people, for they had long been in the habit of exercising a great portion of self-control. Although the paramount authority of the parent state existed over them, yet a large field of legislation had always been open to our colonial assemblies. They were accustomed to representative bodies and the forms of free government; they understood the doctrine of the division of power among different branches, and the necessity of checks on each. The character of our countrymen, moreover, was sober, moral and religious; and there was little in the change to shock their feelings of justice and humanity, or even to disturb an honest prejudice. We had no domestic throne to overturn, no privileged orders to cast down, no violent changes of property to encounter. In the American Revolution, no man sought or wished for more than to defend and enjoy his own. None hoped for plunder or for spoil. Rapacity was unknown to it; the axe was not among the instruments of its accomplishment; and we all know that it could not have lived a single day under any well founded imputation of possessing a tendency adverse to the Christian religion.

It need not surprise us, that, under circumstances less auspicious, political revolutions elsewhere, even when well intended, have terminated differently. It is, indeed, a great achievement, it is the master work of the world, to establish governments entirely popular, on lasting foundations; nor is it easy, indeed, to introduce the popular principle at all, into governments to which it has been altogether a stranger. It cannot be doubted, however, that Europe has come out of the contest, in which she has been so long engaged, with

greatly superior knowledge, and, in many respects, a highly improved condition. . . Whatever benefit has been acquired, is likely to be retained, for it consists mainly in the acquisition of more enlightened ideas. And although kingdoms and provinces may be wrested from the hands that hold them, in the same manner they were obtained; although ordinary and vulgar power may, in human affairs, be lost as it has been won; yet it is the glorious prerogative of the empire of knowledge, that what it gains it never loses. On the contrary it increases by the multiple of its own power; all its ends become means; all its attainments, helps to new conquests. Its whole abundant harvest is but so much seed wheat, and nothing has ascertained, and nothing can ascertain, the amount of ultimate product.

Under the influence of this rapidly increasing knowledge, the people have begun, in all forms of government, to think, and to reason, on affairs of state. Regarding government as an institution for the public good, they demand a knowledge of its operations, and a participation in its exercise. A call for the Representative system, wherever it is not enjoyed, and where there is already intelligence enough to estimate its value, is perseveringly made. Where men may speak out, they demand it; where the bayonet is at their throats, they pray for it.

When Louis XIV. said, "I am the state," he expressed the essence of the doctrine of unlimited power. By the rules of that system, the people are disconnected from the state; they are its subjects; it is their lord. These ideas, founded in the love of power, and long supported by the excess and the abuse of it, are yielding, in our age, to other opinions; and the civilized world seems at last to be proceeding to the conviction of that fundamental and manifest truth, that the powers of government are but a trust, and that they cannot be lawfully exercised but for the good of the community. As knowledge is more and more extended, this conviction becomes more and more general.

Knowledge, in truth, is the great sun in the firmament. Life and power are scattered with all its beams. The prayer of the Grecian combatant, when enveloped in unnatural clouds and darkness, is the appropriate political supplication for the people of every country not yet blessed with free institutions;

‘Dispel this cloud, the light of heaven restore,
Give me to SEE—and Ajax asks no more.’

We may hope, that the growing influence of enlightened sentiments will promote the permanent peace of the world. Wars, to maintain family alliances, to uphold or to cast down dynasties, to regulate successions to thrones, which have occupied so much room in the history of modern times, if not less likely to happen at all, will be less likely to become general and involve many nations, as the great principle shall be more and more established, that the interest of the world is peace, and its first great statute, that every nation possesses the power of establishing a government for itself. But public opinion has attained also an influence over governments, which do not admit the popular principle into their organization. A necessary respect for the judgment of the world operates, in some measure, as a control over the most unlimited forms of authority. It is owing, perhaps, to this truth, that the interesting struggle of the Greeks has been suffered to go on so long, without a direct interference, either to wrest that country from its present masters, and add it to other powers, or to execute the system of pacification by force, and with united strength, lay the neck of christian and civilized Greece at the foot of the barbarian Turk. Let us thank God that we live in an age, when something has influence besides the bayonet, and when the sternest authority does not venture to encounter the scorching power of public reproach. Any attempt of the kind I have mentioned, should be met by one universal burst of indignation; the air of

the civilized world ought to be made too warm to be comfortably breathed by any who would hazard it.

It is, indeed, a touching reflection, that while, in the fulness of our country's happiness, we rear this monument to her honor, we look for instruction, in our undertaking, to a country which is now in fearful contest, not for works of art or memorials of glory, but for her own existence. Let her be assured, that she is not forgotten in the world; that her efforts are applauded, and that constant prayers ascend for her success. And let us cherish a confident hope for her final triumph. If the true spark of religious and civil liberty be kindled, it will burn. Human agency cannot extinguish it. Like the earth's central fire it may be smothered for a time; the ocean may overwhelm it; mountains may press it down; but its inherent and unconquerable force will heave both the ocean and the land, and at some time or another, in some place or another, the volcano will break out and flame up to heaven.

Among the great events of the half century, we must reckon, certainly, the Revolution of South America; and we are not likely to overrate the importance of that Revolution, either to the people of the country itself or to the rest of the world. The late Spanish colonies, now independent States, under circumstances less favorable, doubtless, than attended our own Revolution, have yet successfully commenced their national existence. They have accomplished the great object of establishing their independence; they are known and acknowledged in the world; and although in regard to their systems of government, their sentiments on religious toleration, and their provisions for public instruction, they may have yet much to learn, it must be admitted that they have risen to the condition of settled and established states, more rapidly than could have been reasonably anticipated. They already furnish an exhilarating example of the difference between free governments and despotic misrule. Their commerce, at this moment, creates a new activity in

all the great marts of the world. They show themselves able, by an exchange of commodities, to bear a useful part in the intercourse of nations. A new spirit of enterprize and industry begins to prevail; all the great interests of society receive a salutary impulse; and the progress of information not only testifies to an improved condition, but constitutes, itself, the highest and most essential improvement.

When the battle of Bunker Hill was fought, the existence of South America was scarcely felt in the civilized world. The thirteen little colonies of North America habitually called themselves the 'Continent.' Borne down by colonial subjugation, monopoly, and bigotry, these vast regions of the South were hardly visible above the horizon. But in our day there hath been, as it were, a new creation. The Southern Hemisphere emerges from the sea. Its lofty mountains begin to lift themselves into the light of heaven; its broad and fertile plains stretch out, in beauty, to the eye of civilized man, and at the mighty being of the voice of political liberty the waters of darkness retire.

And, now, let us indulge an honest exultation in the conviction of the benefit, which the example of our country has produced, and is likely to produce, on human freedom and human happiness. And let us endeavor to comprehend, in all its magnitude, and to feel, in all its importance, the part assigned to us in the great drama of human affairs. We are placed at the head of the system of representative and popular governments. Thus far our example shows, that such governments are compatible, not only with respectability and power, but with repose, with peace, with security of personal rights, with good laws and a just administration.

We are not propagandists. Wherever other systems are preferred, either as being thought better in themselves, or as better suited to existing condition, we leave the preference to be enjoyed. Our history

It also proves, however, that the popular form is practicable, and that with wisdom and knowledge men may govern themselves; and the duty incumbent on us is, to preserve the consistency of this cheering example, and take care that nothing may weaken its authority with the world. If, in our case, the Representative system ultimately fail, popular governments must be pronounced impossible. No combination of circumstances more favorable to the experiment can ever be expected to occur. The last hopes of mankind, therefore, rest with us; and if it should be proclaimed, that our example had become an argument against the experiment, the knell of popular liberty would be sounded throughout the earth.

These are excitements to duty; but they are not suggestions of doubt. Our history and our condition, all that is gone before us, and all that surrounds us, authorize the belief, that popular governments, though subject to occasional variations, perhaps not always for the better, in form, may yet, in their general character, be as durable and permanent as other systems. We know, indeed, that, in our country, any other is impossible. The Principle of Free Governments adheres to the American soil. It is bedded in it; immoveable as its mountains.

And let the sacred obligations which have devolved on this generation, and on us, sink deep into our hearts. Those are daily dropping from among us, who established our liberty and our government. The great trust now descends to new hands. Let us apply ourselves to that which is presented to us, as our appropriate object. We can win no laurels in a war for independence. Earlier and worthier hands have gathered them all. Nor are there places for us by the side of Solon, and Alfred, and other founders of states. Our fathers have filled them. But there remains to us a great duty of defence and preservation; and there is opened to us, also, a noble pursuit, to which the spirit of the times strongly invites us. Our

proper business is improvement. Let our age be the age of improvement. In a day of peace, let us advance the arts of peace and the works of peace. Let us develop the resources of our land, call forth its powers, build up its institutions, promote all its great interests, and see whether we also, in our day and generation, may not perform something worthy to be remembered. Let us cultivate a true spirit of union and harmony. In pursuing the great objects, which our condition points out to us, let us act under a settled conviction, and an habitual feeling, that these twenty-four states are one country. Let our conceptions be enlarged to the circle of our duties. Let us extend our ideas over the whole of the vast field in which we are called to act. Let our object be, our country, our whole country, and nothing but our country. And, by the blessing of God, may that country itself become a vast and splendid Monument, not of oppression and terror, but of Wisdom, of Peace, and of Liberty, upon which the world may gaze, with admiration, forever.

AN ORATION,

DELIVERED JULY 4, 1825,

IN COMMEMORATION OF AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE, BEFORE
THE SUPREME EXECUTIVE OF THE COMMONWEALTH, AND
THE CITY COUNCIL AND INHABITANTS OF THE CITY OF
BOSTON :

BY CHARLES SPRAGUE.



WHY, on this day, lingers along these sacred walls, the spirit-kindling anthem? Why, on this day, waits the herald of God at the altar, to utter forth his holy prayer? Why, on this day, congregate here the wise, and the good, and the beautiful of the land?—Fathers! Friends! it is the Sabbath Day of Freedom! The race of the ransomed, with grateful hearts and exulting voices, have again come up, in the sunlight of peace, to the Jubilee of their Independence!

The story of our country's sufferings, our country's triumphs, though often and eloquently told, is still a story that cannot tire, and must not be forgotten. You will listen to its recital, however unadorned; and I shall not fear, therefore, even from the place where your chosen ones have so long stood, to delight and enlighten, I shall not fear to address you. Though I tell you no new thing, I speak of that, which can never fall coldly on your ears. You will listen, for you are the sons and daughters of the heroic men, who lighted the beacon of "rebellion," and unfurled, by its blaze, the triumphant banner of liberty; your own blood will speak for me. A feeble few of that intrepid band are now among you, yet spared by the grave for your veneration; they will speak for me. Their sinking forms, their bleached locks, their honorable scars;—these will, indeed, speak for me. Undaunted men!

how must their dim eyes brighten, and their old hearts grow young with rapture, as they look round on the happiness of their own creation. Long may they remain, our glad and grateful gaze, to teach us all, that we may treasure all, of the hour of doubt and danger; and when their God shall summon them to a glorious rest, may they bear to their departed comrades the confirmation of their country's renown, and their children's felicity.

We meet to indulge in pleasing reminiscences. One happy household, we have come round the table of memory, to banquet on the good deeds of others, and to grow good ourselves, by that on which we feed. Our hope for remembrance, our desire to remember friends and benefactors, are among the warmest and purest sentiments of our nature. To the former we cling stronger, as life itself grows weaker. We know that we shall forget, but the thought of being forgotten, is the death-knell to the spirit. Though our bodies, moulder, we would have our memories live. When we are gone, we shall not hear the murmuring voice of affection, the grateful tribute of praise; still, we love to believe that voice will be raised, and that tribute paid. Few so humble, that they sink below, none so exalted, that they rise above, this common feeling of humanity. The shipwrecked sailor, thrown on a shore where human eye never lightened, before he scoops in the burning sand his last, sad resting-place, scratches on a fragment of his shattered bark the record of his fate, in the melancholy hope, that it may some day be repeated to the dear ones, who have long looked out in vain for his coming. The laurelled warrior, whose foot has trodden on crowns, whose hand has divided empires, when he sinks on victory's red field, and life flies hunted from each quivering vein, turns his last mortal thought on that life to come, his country's brightest page.

The remembrance we so ardently desire, we render unto others. To those who are dear, we pay our dearest tribute. It is exhibited in the most simple,

in the most sublime forms. We behold it in the child, digging a little grave for its dead favorite, and marking the spot with a willow twig and a tear. We behold it in the congregated nation, setting up on high its monumental pile to the mighty. We beheld it, lately, on that green plain, dyed with freedom's first blood; on that proud hill, ennobled as freedom's first fortress; when the tongues of the Eloquent, touched with creative fire, seemed to bid the dust beneath them live, and the long-buried come forth. We behold it now, here, in this consecrated temple, where we have assembled to pay our annual debt of gratitude, to talk of the bold deeds of our ancestors, from the day of peril, when they wrestled with the savage for his birthright, to the day of glory, when they proclaimed a new charter to man, and gave a new nation to the world.

Roll back the tide of time : how powerfully to us applies the promise : " I will give thee the heathen for an inheritance." Not many generations ago, where you now sit, circled with all that exalts and embellishes civilized life, the rank thistle nodded in the wind, and the wild fox dug his hole unscared. Here lived and loved another race of beings. Beneath the same sun that rolls over your heads, the Indian hunter pursued the panting deer; gazing on the same moon that smiles for you, the Indian lover wooed his dusky mate. Here the wigwam blaze beamed on the tender and helpless, the council fire glared on the wise and daring. Now they dipped their noble limbs in your sedgy lakes, and now they paddled the light canoe along your rocky shores. Here they warred; the echoing whoop, the bloody grapple, the defying death-song, all were here; and when the tiger strife was over, here curled the smoke of peace. Here, too, they worshipped; and from many a dark bosom went up a pure prayer to the Great Spirit. He had not written His laws for them on tables of stone, but He had traced them on the tables of their hearts. The poor child of nature knew not the God of revelation, but the God of the universe he acknowledged in every thing around.

He beheld him in the star that sunk in beauty behind his lonely dwelling, in the sacred orb that flamed on him from his mid-day throne; in the flower that snapped in the morning breeze, in the lofty pine, that defied a thousand whirlwinds; in the timid warbler that never left its native grove, in the fearless eagle, whose untired pinion was wet in clouds; in the worm that crawled at his foot, and in his own matchless form, glowing with a spark of that light, to whose mysterious source he bent, in humble, though blind adoration.

And all this has passed away. Across the ocean came a pilgrim bark, bearing the seeds of life and death. The former were sown for you, the latter sprang up in the path of the simple native. Two hundred years have changed the character of a great continent, and blotted forever from its face a whole, peculiar people. Art has usurped the bowers of nature, and the anointed children of education have been too powerful for the tribes of the ignorant. Here and there a stricken few remain, but how unlike their bold, untamed, untameable progenitors! The Indian, of falcon glance, and lion bearing, the theme of the touching ballad, the hero of the pathetic tale is gone! and his degraded offspring crawl upon the soil where he walked in majesty, to remind us how miserable is man, when the foot of the conqueror is on his neck.

As a race they have withered from the land. Their arrows are broken, their springs are dried up, their cabins are in the dust. Their council-fire has long since gone out on the shore, and their war-cry is fast dying to the untrodden west. Slowly and sadly they climb the distant mountains, and read their doom in the setting sun. They are shrinking before the mighty tide which is pressing them away; they must soon hear the roar of the last wave, which will settle over them forever. Ages hence, the inquisitive white man, as he stands by some growing city, will ponder on the structure of their disturbed remains, and wonder to what manner of person they belonged. They will

live only in the songs and chronicles of their exterminators. Let these be faithful to their rude virtues as men, and pay due tribute to their unhappy fate as a people.

To the Pious, who, in this desert region built a city of refuge, little less than to the Brave, who round that city reared an impregnable wall of safety, we owe the blessings of this day. To enjoy, and to perpetuate religious freedom, the sacred herald of civil liberty, they deserted their native land, where the foul spirit of persecution was up in its fury, and where mercy had long wept at the enormities perpetrated in the abused names of Jehovah and Jesus. "Resist unto blood!" blind zealots had found in the bible, and lamentably indeed, did they fulfil the command. With "Thus saith the Lord," the engines of cruelty were set in motion, and many a martyr spirit, like the ascending prophet from Jordan's bank, escaped in fire to heaven.

It was in this night of time, when the incubus of bigotry sat heavy on the human soul:—

When crown and crosier ruled a coward world,
And mental darkness o'er the nations curled,—
When, wrapt in sleep, earth's torpid children lay,
Hugged their vile chains, and dreamed their age away,—
'Twas then, by faith impelled, by freedom fired,
By hope supported, and by God inspired,—
'Twas then the pilgrims left their father's graves,
To seek a Home beyond the waste of waves;
And where it rose, all rough and wintry, here,
They swelled devotion's song, and dropped devotion's tear.

Can we sufficiently admire the firmness of this little brotherhood, thus self-banished from their country? Unkind and cruel, it was true, but still their country. There they were born, and there, where the lamp of life was lighted, they had hoped it would go out. There a father's hand had led them, a mother's smile had warmed them. There were the haunts of their boyish days, their kinsfolk, their friends, their recollections, their all. Yet all was left; even while their heartstrings bled at the parting, all was left; and a

stormy sea, a savage waste, and a fearful destiny, were encountered—for Heaven, and for you.)

It is easy enough to praise; when success has sanctified the act; and to fancy that we, too, could endure a heavy trial, which is to be followed by a rich reward. But before the deed is crowned, while the doers are yet about us, bearing like ourselves the common infirmities of the flesh, we stand aloof, and are not always ready to discern the spirit that sustains and exalts them. When centuries of experience have rolled away, we laud the exploit on which we might have frowned, if we had lived with those who left their age behind to achieve it. We read of empires founded, and people redeemed, of actions embalmed by time, and hallowed by romance, and our hearts leap at the lofty recital: we feel it would be a glorious thing to snatch the laurels of immortal fame. But it is in the day of doubt, when the result is hidden in clouds, when danger stands in every path, and death is lurking in every corner; it is then, that the men who are born for great occasions, start boldly from the world's trembling multitude, and swear to "do, or die."

Such men were they who peopled;—such men, too, were they who preserved these shores. Of these latter giant spirits, who battled for independence, we are to remember, that destruction awaited defeat. They were "rebels," obnoxious to the fate of "rebels." They were tearing asunder the ties of loyalty, and hazarding all the sweet endearments of social and domestic life. They were unfriended, weak and wanting. Going thus forth, against a powerful and vindictive foe, what could they dare to hope? What had they not to dread? They could not tell, but that vengeance would hunt them down, and infamy hang its black scutcheon over their graves. They did not know that the angel of the Lord would go forth with them, and smite the invaders of their sanctuary. They did not know that generation after generation, would, on this day, rise up and call them blessed; that the sleeping quarry would leap forth to pay them voiceless homage; that

their names would be handed down, from father to son, the penman's theme, and the poet's inspiration; challenging, through countless years, the jubilant praises of an emancipated people, and the plaudits of an admiring world! No! They knew, only, that the arm which should protect, was oppressing them, and they shook it off; that the chalice presented to their lips was a poisoned one, and they dashed it away. They knew, only, that a rod was stretched over them for their audacity; and beneath this they vowed never to bend, while a single pulse could beat the larum to "rebellion." That rod must be broken, or they must bleed! And it was broken! Led on by their Washington, the heroes went forth. Clothed in the panoply of a righteous cause, they went forth boldly. Guarded by a good Providence, they went forth triumphantly. They labored, that we might find rest; they fought, that we might enjoy peace; they conquered, that we might inherit freedom!

You will not now expect a detail of the actions of that eventful struggle. To the annalists of your country belongs the pleasing task of tracing the progress of a revolution, the purest in its origin, and the most stupendous in its consequences, that ever gladdened the world. To their fidelity we commit the wisdom which planned, and the valor which accomplished it. The dust of every contested mound, of every rescued plain, will whisper to them their duty, for it is dust that breathed and bled; the hallowed dust of men who would be free, or nothing.

There, in the sweet hour of eventide, the child of sentiment will linger, and conjure up their martyr forms. Heroes, with their garments rolled in blood, will marshal round him. The thrilling life-note, the drum's heart-kindling beat, will again run down the shadowy ranks; the short, commanding word, the fatal volley, the dull death-groan, the glad hurrah! again will break on his cheated ear. The battle that sealed his country's fate, his country's freedom, will rage before him in all its dreadful splendor. And when the airy pageant of

his fancy fades in the gathering mists, he will turn his footsteps from the sacred field, with a warmer gratitude, and a deeper reverence for the gallant spirits who resigned dear life, in defence of life's dear blessing.

The "feelings, manners and principles" which led to the declaration of the fourth of July, '76, shine forth in the memorable language of its great author. He and his bold brethren proclaimed that all men were created equal; and endowed by their Creator with the right of liberty; that for the security of this right, government was instituted, and that when it violated its trust, the governed might abolish it. That crisis, they declared, had arrived; and the injuries and usurpations of the parent country were no longer to be endured. Recounting the dark catalogue of abuses which they had suffered, and appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of their intentions; in the name, and by the authority of the people, the only fountain of legitimate power, they shook off forever their allegiance to the British crown, and pronounced the united colonies an Independent Nation!

What their "feelings, manners and principles" led them to publish, their wisdom, valor, and perseverance enabled them to establish. The blessings secured by the Pilgrims and the Patriots, have descended to us. In the virtue and intelligence of the inheritors we confide for their duration. They who attained them have left us their example, and bequeathed us their blood. We shall never forget the one, unless we prove recreant to the other. On the Dorick columns of religious and civil liberty, a majestic temple has been reared, and they who dwell within its walls, will never bow in bondage to man, till they forget to bend in reverence to God.

The achievement of American Independence was not merely the separation of a few obscure colonies from their parent realm; it was the practical annunciation to created man, that he was created free! and it will stand in history, the epoch from which to compute the real duration of political liberty. Intolerance and

tyranny had for ages leagued to keep their victim down. While the former could remain the pious guardian of his conscience, the latter knew it had nothing to fear from his courage. He was theirs, soul and body. His intellectual energies were paralyzed, that he might not behold the corruptions of the church; and his physical powers were fettered, that he could not rise up against the abuses of the state. Thus centuries of darkness rolled away. Light broke, from time to time, but it only served to show the surrounding clouds; bright stars, here and there, looked out, but they were the stars of a gloomy night. At length, the morning dawned, when one generation of your ancestors willed that none but their Maker should guide them in their duty as Christians; and the perfect day shone forth, when another declared that from none but their Maker would they derive their immunities as men. The world had seen the former secure a privilege, whose original denial would have left their faith asleep in its founder's sepulchre; and they now beheld the latter in the enjoyment of rights, without which, their freedom would have been palsied at the footstool of a monarch's throne.

If, in remembering the oppressed, you think the oppressors ought not to be forgotten, I might urge that the splendid result of the great struggle should fully reconcile us to the madness of those, who rendered that struggle necessary. I can almost forgive the presumption which "declared" its right "to bind the American colonies," for it was wofully expiated by the humiliation which "acknowledged" those same "American colonies" to be "SOVEREIGN and INDEPENDENT STATES." The immediate workers, too, of that political iniquity have passed away. The mildew of shame will forever feed upon their memories, and a brand has been set upon their deeds, that even time's all gnawing tooth can never destroy. But they have passed away; and of all the millions they misruled, the millions they would have misruled, how few remain! Another race is there to lament the folly, another here

to magnify the wisdom, that cut the knot of empire. Shall these inherit and entail everlasting enmity? Like the Carthaginian Hamilcar, shall we come up hither with our children, and on this holy altar swear the pagan oath of undying hate? Even our goaded fathers disdained this. Let us fulfil their words, and prove to the people of England, that, "in peace," we know how to treat them "as friends." They have been twice told that, "in war," we know how to meet them "as enemies;" and they will hardly ask another lesson, for it may be, that when the third trumpet shall sound, a voice will echo along their sea-girt cliffs: "The Glory has departed!"

Some few of their degenerate ones, tainting the bowers where they sit, decry the growing greatness of a land they will not love; and others, after eating from our basket, and drinking from our cup, go home to pour forth the senseless libel against a people, at whose firesides they were warmed. But a few pens, dipped in gall, will not retard our progress; let not a few tongues, festering in falsehood, disturb our repose. We have those among us, who are able both to pare the talons of the kite, and pull out the fangs of the viper; who can lay bare, for the disgust of all good men, the gangrene of the insolent reviewer, and inflict such a cruel mark on the back of the mortified runaway, as will long take from him the blessed privilege of being forgotten.

These high and low detractors speak not, we trust, the feelings of their nation. Time, the great corrector, is there fast enlightening both ruler and ruled. They are treading in our steps, and gradually, though slowly, pulling up their ancient religious and political landmarks. Yielding to the liberal spirit of the age, a spirit born and fostered here, they are not only loosening their own long rivetted shackles, but are raising the voice of encouragement, and extending the hand of assistance, to the "rebels" of other climes.

In spite of all that has passed, we owe England much; and even on this occasion, standing in the

midst of my generous-minded countrymen, I may fearlessly, willingly, acknowledge the debt. We owe England much; nothing for her martyrdoms; nothing for her proscriptions; nothing for the innocent blood with which she has stained the white robes of religion and liberty—these claims our Fathers cancelled, and her monarch rendered them and theirs a full acquittance forever—but for the living treasures of her mind, garnered up and spread abroad for centuries, by her great and gifted. Who that has drank at the sparkling streams of her poetry, who that has drawn from the deep fountains of her wisdom; who that speaks, and reads, and thinks her language, will be slow to own his obligation? One of your purest, ascended patriots,* he, who compassed sea and land for liberty, whose early voice for her echoed round yonder consecrated hall, whose dying accents for her went up in solitude and suffering from the ocean;—when he sat down to bless with the last token of a father's remembrance, the Son, who wears his mantle with his name,—bequeathed him the recorded lessons of England's best and wisest, and sealed the legacy of love with a prayer, whose full accomplishment we live to witness:—"that the spirit of LIBERTY might rest upon him."

While we bring our offerings for the mighty of our own land, shall we not remember the chivalrous spirits of other shores, who shared with them the hour of weakness and wo? Pile to the clouds the majestic columns of glory, let the lips of those who can speak well, hallow each spot where the bones of your bold repose; but forget not those who with your bold went out to battle.

Among these men of noble daring, there was ONE, a young and gallant stranger, who left the blushing vine-hills of his delightful France. The people whom he came to succor, were not his people; he knew them only in the wicked story of their wrongs. He was no

* See Life of Josiah Quincy, Jr. by his son, Josiah Quincy, Mayor of Boston.

mercenary wretch, striving for the spoil of the vanquished; the palace acknowledged him for its lord, and the valley yielded him its increase. He was no nameless man, staking life for reputation; he ranked among nobles, and looked unawed upon kings. He was no friendless outcast, seeking for a grave to hide his cold heart; he was girdled by the companions of his childhood, his kinsmen were about him, his wife was before him.

Yet from all these he turned away, and came. Like a lofty tree, that shakes down its green glories, to battle with the winter storm, he flung aside the trappings of place and pride, to crusade for freedom, in freedom's holy land. He came; but not in the day of successful rebellion, not when the new-risen sun of independence had burst the cloud of time, and careered to its place in the heavens. He came when darkness curtained the hills, and the tempest was abroad in its anger; when the plough stood still in the field of promise, and briers cumbered the garden of beauty; when fathers were dying, and mothers were weeping over them; when the wife was binding up the gashed bosom of her husband, and the maiden was wiping the death damp from the brow of her lover. He came when the brave began to fear the power of man, and the pious to doubt the favor of God.

It was then, that this ONE joined the ranks of a revolted people. Freedom's little phalanx bade him a grateful welcome. With them he courted the battle's rage, with theirs his arm was lifted; with theirs his blood was shed. Long and doubtful was the conflict. At length, kind heaven smiled on the good cause, and the beaten invaders fled. The profane were driven from the temple of liberty, and, at her pure shrine, the pilgrim warrior, with his adored COMMANDER, knelt and worshipped. Leaving there his offering, the incense of an uncorrupted spirit, he at length rose up, and crowned with benedictions, turned his happy feet towards his long deserted home.

After nearly fifty years, that ONE has come again.

Can mortal tongue tell, can mortal heart feel, the sublimity of that coming? Exulting millions rejoice in it, and their loud, long, transporting shout, like the mingling of many winds, rolls on, undying, to freedom's farthest mountains. A congregated nation comes round him. Old men bless him, and children reverence him. The lovely come out to look upon him, the learned deck their halls to greet him, the rulers of the land rise up to do him homage. How his full heart labors! He views the rusting trophies of departed days, he treads the high places where his brethren moulder, he bends before the tomb of his "FATHER;"—his words are tears; the speech of sad remembrance. But he looks round upon a ransomed land, and a joyous race, he beholds the blessings those trophies secured, for which those brethren died, for which that "FATHER" lived; and again his words are tears; the eloquence of gratitude and joy.

Spread forth creation like a map; bid earth's dead multitudes revive;—and of all the pageant splendors that ever glittered to the sun, when looked his burning eye on a sight like this? Of all the myriads that have come and gone, what cherished minion ever ruled an hour like this? Many have struck the redeeming blow for their own freedom, but who, like this man, has bared his bosom in the cause of strangers? Others have lived in the love of their own people, but who, like this man, has drank his sweetest cup of welcome with another? Matchless chief! of glory's immortal tablets, there is one for him, for him alone! Oblivion shall never shroud its splendor; the everlasting flame of liberty shall guard it, that the generations of men may repeat the name recorded there, the beloved name of LAFAYETTE!

They who endured the burden of the conflict, are fast going to their rest. Every passing gale sighs over another veteran's grave, and ere long, the last sage, and the last old soldier of the revolution, will be seen no more. Soon, too soon, will you seek in vain for even one, who can tell you of that day of stout

hearts and strong hands. You lately beheld, on yonder glorious hill, a group of ancient men, baring their grey heads beneath the blaze of heaven; but never more at such a sight will your grateful hearts grow soft. These will never again assemble on earth. They have stood together in war, they have congregated in peace, their next meeting will be in the fields of eternity. They must shortly sleep in the bosom of the land they redeemed, and in that land's renown will alone be their remembrance.

Let us cherish those who remain to link the living with the dead. Of these, let one thought, to-day, rest on him, whose pen and fame this day has rendered immortal. With him, too, now that the bitter feuds of a bitter hour are forgotten, we may associate another, the venerable successor of our WASHINGTON. Here broke his morning radiance, and here yet linger his evening beams.

- "Sure the last end of the good man is peace!
- "Night dews fall not more gently to the ground,
- "Nor weary, worn-out winds expire so soft.
- "Behold him, in the eventide of life,
- "A life well-spent!
- "By unperceived degrees he wears away,
- "Yet, like the sun, seems larger at his setting!"

I look round in vain for two of your exalted patriots, who, on your last festival-day, sat here in the midst of you; for him, who then worthily wore the highest honors you could bestow, who in your name greeted your Nation's Guest, and took him by the hand and wept: for him, too, who devoted to your service a youth of courage, and an age of counsel; who long ruled over you in purity and wisdom, and then, gently shaking off his dignities, retired to his native shades, laden with your love. They have both passed away, and the tongues that bade the "Apostle of Liberty" welcome, will never bid him farewell.

In the place of the Fathers shall be the children. To the seat which Eustis and Brooks adorned, the peo-

ple of this state have united to elevate one, whom they have often delighted to honor. He sits where they sat, who were laboring in the vineyard before he was born. His name adds another bright stud to the golden scutcheon of the Commonwealth. While his heart warms with honest pride at the confidence so flatteringly reposed in him, he will wisely remember what that confidence expects from him, in the discharge of his high trust. Chosen by all, he will govern for all; and thus sustaining his well-earned reputation, may he live long in the affection of a generous people.

I shall not omit, on this occasion, to congratulate you on the result of an election, which has recently raised to the highest station in your republic, one of your most distinguished citizens. While, however, the ardent wishes of so many have been crowned by this gratifying event, it is not to be forgotten, that there are those among us, men of pure and patriotic minds, who responded not Amen, to the general voice. I should be ashamed of the feelings which would insult theirs, by an unworthy exultation. The illustrious individual, whom the representatives of the nation have pronounced "most worthy," would be the first to frown upon it, as he has ever been among the first to acknowledge the merits of his exalted competitors. To the high minded friends of these, in common with us all, this day and its rites belong; and I cannot violate the trust confided to me, I will not subject myself to a pang of regret, by the indulgence of language, which should send a single being from this place, with a less joyous spirit than he entered it. It is safer to be dull than bitter, and I had rather you would all be willing to forget the labor of this hour in charity, than that one among you should feel compelled to remember it in unkindness.

I have alluded to this event, not merely for the purpose of obtruding upon you the expression of personal gratification, but because it offers another striking proof of the stability of our free institutions. Since the strife of 1800, we have not witnessed so vio-

lent a contest as this, through which we have lately passed; yet now, how quiet are become the elements of discord. With a praiseworthy forbearance, all, or nearly all, have bowed to the expression of the public will, and seem determined, in the words of one of his accomplished rivals, to judge the ruler of the nation. "by his measures."

While this spirit triumphs, we have nothing to dread from the animosities of party. However turbulent, they will be harmless. Like the commotions of the physical world, they will be necessary. Far distant be the day, when it must be said of this country, that it has no parties, for it must be also said, if any one be bold enough to say it, that it has no liberties. Let hawk-eyed jealousy be forever on the alert, to watch the footsteps of power. Let it be courteous in language, but stern and unbending in principle. Whoever he may be, wherever he may be, that would strike at the people's rights, let him hear the people's voice, proclaiming that "whom it will, it can set up, and whom it will it can set down."

Fear not party zeal, it is the salt of your existence. There are no parties under a despotism. There, no man lingers round a ballot-box; no man drinks the poison of a *licentious* press; no man plots *treason* at a debating society; no man distracts his head about the science of government. All there, is a calm, unruffled sea;—even a dead sea of black and bitter waters. But we move upon a living stream, forever pure, forever rolling. Its mighty tide sometimes flows higher, and rushes faster, than its wont, and as it bounds, and foams, and dashes along in sparkling violence, it now and then throws up its fleecy cloud; but this rises only to disappear, and as it fades away before the sunbeams of intelligence and patriotism, you behold upon its bosom the rainbow signal of returning peace, arching up to declare that there is no danger.

And now, it is no vain speech to say, the eyes of the world have been long upon us. For nearly fifty years we have run the glorious race of empire. Friends have

gazed in fear, and foes in scorn; but fear is lost in joy, and scorn is turning to wonder. The great experiment has succeeded. Mankind behold the spectacle of a land, whose crown is wisdom, whose mitre is purity, whose heraldry is talent; a land, where public sentiment is supreme, and where every man may erect the pyramid of his own fair fame. They behold, they believe, and they will imitate. The day is coming, when thrones can no longer be supported by parchment rolls. It is not a leaf of writing, signed and sealed by three frail, mortal men, that can forever keep down suffering millions; these will rise! they will point to another scroll; to that, of whose bold signers our THREE* remain; our THREE, whose "alliance" was, indeed, a "holy" one, for it met the approving smile of a Holy God!

Many must suffer defeat, and many must taste of death, but freedom's battle will yet be fought and won. As heaven unbinds the intellect of man, his own right arm will rescue his body. Liberty will yet walk abroad in the gardens of Europe. Her hand will pluck the grapes of the south, her eye will warm the snow-drifts of the north. The crescent will go down in blood, from that "bright clime of battle and of song," for which He died, that noble Briton, that warrior-bard, who raised his generous arm like La Fayette, who struck his golden lyre to La Fayette's great Leader!

And to this young land will belong the praise. The struggling nations point to our example, and in their own tongues repeat the cheering language of our sympathy. Already, when a master-spirit towers among them, they call him—their Washington. Along the foot of the Andes, they breathe in gratitude the name of Clay;—by the ivy-buried ruins of the Parthenon, they bless the eloquence of Webster!

* John Adams, Charles Carroll, Thomas Jefferson the surviving signers of the Declaration of Independence.

Fellow-Citizens, my imperfect task is ended. I have told you an old tale, but you will forgive that, for it is one of your country's glory. You will forgive me that I have spoken of the simple creatures who were here from the beginning, for it was to tell you how much had been wrought for you by Piety: you will forgive me that I have lingered round the green graves of the dead, for it was to remind you how much had been achieved for you by Patriotism. Forgive me, did I say? Would you have forgiven me, if I had not done this? Could I, ought I, to have wasted this happy hour in cold and doubtful speculation, while your bosoms were bounding with the holy throb of gratitude? Oh! no;—it was not for that you came up hither. The groves of learning, the halls of wisdom, you have deserted; the crowded mart, the chambers of beauty, you have made solitary—that here, with free, exulting voices, before the only throne at which the free can bend, your hearts might pour forth their full, gushing tribute to the benefactors of your country.

On that country heaven's highest blessings are descending. I would not, for I need not, use the language of inflation; but the decree has gone forth; and as sure as the blue arch of creation is in beauty above us, so sure will it span the mightiest dominion that ever shook the earth. Imagination cannot outstrip reality, when it contemplates our destinies as a people. Where nature slept in her solitary loveliness, villages, and cities, and states, have smiled into being. A gigantic nation has been born. Labor and art are adorning, and science is exalting, the land that religion sanctified, and liberty redeemed. From the shores to the mountains, from the regions of frost to the vallies of eternal spring, myriads of bold and understanding men are uniting to strengthen a government of their own choice, and perpetuate the institutions of their own creation.

The germe wafted over the ocean, has struck its

deep root in the earth, and raised its high head to the clouds:

Man looked in scorn, but Heaven beheld, and blessed
Its branchy glories, spreading o'er the West.
No summer gaude, the wonder of a day,
Born but to bloom, and then to fade away,
A giant oak, it lifts its lofty form,
Greens in the sun, and strengthens in the storm.
Long in its shade shall children's children come,
And welcome earth's poor wanderers to a home.
Long shall it live, and every blast defy,
Till time's last whirlwind sweep the vaulted sky.

AN ORATION,

DELIVERED

AT CAMBRIDGE, ON THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE
DECLARATION OF THE INDEPENDENCE OF THE UNITED
STATES OF AMERICA :

BY EDWARD EVERETT.

FELLOW CITIZENS,

It belongs to us with strong propriety, to celebrate this day. The town of Cambridge, and the county of Middlesex, are filled with the vestiges of the Revolution; whithersoever we turn our eyes, we behold some memento of its glorious scenes. Within the walls, in which we are now assembled, was convened the first provincial Congress, after its adjournment at Concord. The rural magazine at Medford reminds us of one of the earliest acts of British aggression. The march of both divisions of the Royal army, on the memorable nineteenth of April, was through the limits of Cambridge; in the neighboring towns of Lexington and Concord, the first blood of the Revolution was shed; in West Cambridge, the royal convoy of provisions was, the same day, gallantly surprised by the aged citizens, who stayed to protect their homes, while their sons pursued the foe. Here the first American army was formed; from this place, on the seventeenth of June, was detached the Spartan band, that immortalized the heights of Charlestown, and consecrated that day, with blood and fire, to the cause of American Liberty. Beneath the venerable elm, which still shades the southwestern corner of the common, General Washington first unsheathed his sword at the head of an American army, and to that seat* was wont every

* The first wall pew, on the right hand of the pulpit.

Sunday to repair, to join in the supplications which were made for the welfare of his country.

How changed is now the scene! The foe is gone! The din and the desolation of war are passed; Science has long resumed her station in the shades of our venerable University, no longer glittering with arms; the anxious war-council is no longer in session, to offer a reward for the discovery of the best mode of making salt-petre,—an unpromising stage of hostilities, when an army of twenty thousand men is in the field in front of the foe; the tall grass now waves in the trampled sally-port of some of the rural redoubts, that form a part of the simple lines of circumvallation, within which a half-armed American militia held the flower of the British army blockaded; the plough has done, what the English batteries could not do,—has levelled others of them with the earth; and the Men, the great and good men, their warfare is over, and they have gone quietly down to the dust they redeemed from oppression.

At the close of a half century, since the declaration of our Independence, we are assembled to commemorate that great and happy event. We come together, not because it needs, but because it deserves these acts of celebration. We do not meet each other, and exchange our felicitations, because we should otherwise fall into forgetfulness of this auspicious era; but because we owe it to our fathers and to our children, to mark its return with grateful festivities. The major part of this assembly is composed of those, who had not yet engaged in the active scenes of life, when the Revolution commenced. We come not to applaud our own work, but to pay a filial tribute to the deeds of our fathers. It was for their children, that the heroes and sages of the Revolution labored and bled. They were too wise not to know, that it was not personally their own cause, in which they were embarked; they felt that they were engaging in an enterprize, which an entire generation must be too short to bring to its mature and perfect issue. The most they could

promise themselves was, that, having cast forth the seed of liberty; having shielded its tender germe from the stern blasts that beat upon it; having watered it with the tears of waiting eyes, and the blood of brave hearts; their children might gather the fruit of its branches, while those who planted it should moulder in peace beneath its shade.

Nor was it only in this, that we discern their disinterestedness, their heroic forgetfulness of self. Not only was the independence, for which they struggled, a great and arduous adventure, of which they were to encounter the risk, and others to enjoy the benefits; but the oppressions, which roused them, had assumed, in their day, no worse form than that of a pernicious principle. No intolerable acts of oppression had ground them to the dust. They were not slaves, rising in desperation from beneath the agonies of the lash; but free men, snuffing from afar "the tainted gale of tyranny." The worst encroachments, on which the British ministry had ventured, might have been borne, consistently with the practical enjoyment of many of the advantages resulting from good government. On the score of calculation alone, that generation had much better have paid the duties on glass, painter's colors, stamped paper, and tea, than have plunged into the expenses of the Revolutionary war. But they thought not of shuffling off upon posterity the burden of resistance. They well understood the part, which Providence had assigned to them. They perceived that they were called to discharge a high and perilous office to the cause of Freedom; that their hands were elected to strike the blow, for which near two centuries of preparation—never remitted, though often unconscious—had been making, on one side or the other, of the Atlantic. They felt that the colonies had now reached that stage in their growth, when the difficult problem of colonial government must be solved; difficult, I call it, for such it is, to the statesman, whose mind is not sufficiently enlarged for the idea, that a wise colonial government must,

naturally and rightfully end in independence; that even a mild and prudent sway, on the part of the mother country, furnishes no reason for not severing the bands of the colonial subjection; and that when the rising state has passed the period of adolescence, the only alternative which remains, is that of a peaceable separation, or a convulsive rupture.

The British ministry, at that time weaker than it had ever been since the infatuated reign of James II. had no knowledge of political science, but that which they derived from the text of official records. They drew their maxims, as it was happily said of one of them, that he did his measures, from the file. They heard that a distant province had resisted the execution of an act of parliament. Indeed, and what is the specific, in cases of resistance?—a military force;—and two more regiments are ordered to Boston. Again they hear, that the General Court of Massachusetts Bay has taken counsels subversive of the allegiance due to the crown. A case of a refractory corporation;—what is to be done? First try a *mandamus*; and if that fails, seize the franchises into his Majesty's hands. They never asked the great questions, whether nations, like man, have not their principles of growth; whether Providence has assigned no laws to regulate the changes in the condition of that most astonishing of human things, a nation of kindred men. They did not inquire, I will not say whether it were rightful and expedient, but whether it were practicable, to give law across the Atlantic, to a people who possessed within themselves every imaginable element of self-government;—a people rocked in the cradle of liberty, brought up to hardship, inheriting nothing but their rights on earth, and their hopes in heaven.

But though the rulers of Britain appear not to have caught a glimpse of the great principles involved in these questions, our fathers had asked and answered them. They perceived, with the rapidity of intuition, that the hour of separation had come; because a prin-

ciple was assumed by the British government, which put an instantaneous check to the further growth of liberty. Either the race of civilized man happily planted on our shores, at first slowly and painfully reared, but at length auspiciously multiplying in America, is destined never to constitute a free and independent state; or these measures must be resisted, which go to bind it in a mild but abject colonial vassalage. Either the hope must be forever abandoned, the hope that had been brightening and kindling toward assurance, like the glowing skies of the morning,—the hope that a new centre of civilization was to be planted on the new continent, at which the social and political institutions of the world may be brought to the standard of reason and truth, after thousands of years of degeneracy,—either this hope must be abandoned, and forever, or the battle was now to be fought, first in the political assemblies, and then, if need be, in the field.

In the halls of legislation, scarcely can it be said that the battle was fought. A spectacle indeed seemed to be promised to the civilized world, of breathless interest and uncalculated consequence. "You are placed," said the provincial Congress of Massachusetts, in their address to the inhabitants, of December 4th, 1774, an address promulgated at the close of a session held in this very house, where we are now convened, "You are placed by Providence in a post of honor, because it is a post of danger; and while struggling for the noblest objects, the liberties of our country, the happiness of posterity, and the rights of human nature, the eyes, not only of North America and the whole British empire, but of all Europe, are upon you."* A mighty question of political right was at issue, between the two hemispheres. Europe and America, in the face of mankind, are going to plead the great cause, on which the fate of popular government forever is suspended. One circumstance, and

* Massachusetts State Papers, p. 416.

one alone exists, to diminish the interest of the contention—the perilous inequality of the parties—an inequality far exceeding that, which gives animation to a contest; and so great as to destroy the hope of an ably waged encounter. On the one side, were arrayed the two houses of the British parliament, the modern school of political eloquence, the arena where great minds had for a century and a half strenuously wrestled themselves into strength and power; and in better days the common and upright chancery of an empire, on which the sun never set. Upon the other side, rose up the colonial assemblies of Massachusetts and Virginia, and the continental congress of Philadelphia, composed of men whose training had been within a small provincial circuit; who had never before felt the inspiration, which the consciousness of a station before the world imparts; who brought no power into the contest but that which they drew from their cause and their bosoms. It is by champions like these, that the great principles of representative government, of chartered rights, and constitutional liberty, are to be discussed; and surely never, in the annals of national controversy, was exhibited a triumph so complete of the seemingly weaker party, a rout so disastrous of the stronger. Often as it has been repeated, it will bear another repetition; it never ought to be omitted in the history of constitutional liberty; it ought especially to be repeated this day;—the various addresses, petitions, and appeals, the correspondence, the resolutions, the legislative and popular debates, from 1764, to the declaration of independence, present a maturity of political wisdom, a strength of argument, a gravity of style, a manly eloquence, and a moral courage, of which unquestionably the modern world affords no other example. This meed of praise, substantially accorded at the time by Chatham, in the British parliament, may well be repeated by us. For most of the venerated men to whom it is paid, it is but a pious tribute to departed worth. The Lees and the Henrys, Otis, Quincy, Warren, and Samuel Adams, the men who spoke

those words of thrilling power, which raised and ruled the storm of resistance, and rang like the voice of fate across the Atlantic, are beyond the reach of our praise. To most of them it was granted to witness some of the fruits of their labors; such fruit as revolutions do not often bear. Others departed at an untimely hour, or nobly fell in the onset; too soon for their country, too soon for liberty, too soon for every thing but their own undying fame. But all are not gone; some still survive among us; the favored, enviable men, to hail the jubilee of the independence they declared. Go back, fellow citizens, to that day, when Jefferson and Adams composed the sub-committee, who reported the Declaration of Independence. Think of the mingled sensations of that proud but anxious day, compared to the joy of this. What honor, what crown, what treasure, could the world and all its kingdoms afford, compared with the honor and happiness of having been united in that commission, and living to see its most wavering hopes turned into glorious reality. Venerable men! you have outlived the dark days, which followed your more than heroic deed; you have outlived your own strenuous contention, who should stand first among the people, whose liberty you vindicated. You have lived to bear to each other the respect, which the nation bears to you both; and each has been so happy as to exchange the honorable name of the leader of a party, for that more honorable one, the Father of his Country. While this our tribute of respect, on the jubilee of our independence, is paid to the gray hairs of the venerable survivor in our neighborhood; let it not less heartily be sped to him, whose hand traced the lines of that sacred charter, which, to the end of time, has made this day illustrious. And is an empty profession of respect all that we owe to the man, who can show the original draught of the Declaration of the Independence of the United States of America, in his own handwriting? Ought not a title-deed like this to become the acquisition of the nation?

Ought it not to be laid up in the archives of the people? Ought not the price, at which it is bought, to be the ease and comfort of the old age of him who drew it? Ought not he, who at the age of thirty declared the independence of his country, at the age of eighty, to be secured by his country in the enjoyment of his own?

Nor let us forget, on the return of this eventful day, the men, who, when the conflict of counsel was over, stood forward in that of arms. Yet let me not by faintly endeavoring to sketch, do deep injustice to the story of their exploits. The efforts of a life would scarce suffice to paint out this picture, in all its astonishing incidents, in all its mingled colors of sublimity and woe, of agony and triumph. But the age of commemoration is at hand. The voice of our fathers' blood begins to cry to us, from beneath the soil which it moistened. Time is bringing forward, in their proper relief, the men and the deeds of that high-souled day. The generation of contemporary worthies is gone; the crowd of the unsignalized great and good disappears; and the leaders in war as well as council, are seen, in Fancy's eye, to take their stations on the mount of Remembrance. They come from the embattled cliffs of Abraham; they start from the heaving sods of Bunker's Hill; they gather from the blazing lines of Saratoga and Yorktown, from the blood-dyed waters of the Brandywine, from the dreary snows of Valley Forge, and all the hard fought fields of the war. With all their wounds and all their honors, they rise and plead with us, for their brethren who survive; and bid us, if indeed we cherish the memory of those, who bled in our cause, to show our gratitude, not by sounding words, but by stretching out the strong arm of the country's prosperity, to help the veteran survivors gently down to their graves.

But it is time to turn from sentiments, on which it is unavailing to dwell. The fiftieth return of this all-important day, appears to enjoin on us to reassert the

principles of the Declaration of Independence. Have we not, fellow citizens, to commemorate merely the successful termination of a war? Certainly not; the war of 1756 was, in its duration, nearly equal, and signalized in America by the most brilliant achievements of the provincial arms. But no one would attempt to prevent that war, with all its glorious incidents, from gradually sinking into the shadows, which time throws back on the deeds of men. Do we celebrate the anniversary of our independence, merely because a vast region was severed from an European empire, and established a government for itself? Scarcely even this; the acquisition of Louisiana, a region larger than the old United States,—the almost instantaneous conversion of a vast Spanish colonial waste, into free and prosperous members of our republican federation,—the whole effected by a single happy exercise of the treaty-making power,—this is an event, in nature not wholly unlike, in importance not infinitely beneath the separation of the colonies from England, regarded merely as a historical transaction. But no one thinks of commemorating with festivals the anniversary of this cession; perhaps not ten who hear me recollect the date of the treaty by which it was effected; although it is unquestionably the most important occurrence in our history, since the declaration of independence, and will render the administration of Mr. Jefferson memorable, as long as our republic shall endure.

But it is not merely nor chiefly the military success nor the political event, which we commemorate on these patriotic anniversaries. It is to mistake the principle of our celebration to speak of its object, either as a trite theme, or as one among other important and astonishing incidents, of the same kind, in the world. The declaration of the independence of the United States of America, considered, on the one hand, as the consummation of a long train of measures and counsels—preparatory, even though unconsciously, of this event,

and on the other hand, as the foundation of the systems of government, which have happily been established in our beloved country, deserves commemoration, as the most important event, humanly speaking, in the history of the world ; as forming the era, from which the establishment of government on a rightful foundation is destined universally to date. Looking upon the declaration of independence as the one prominent event, which is to represent the American system, (and history will so look upon it,) I deem it right if itself and seasonable this day to assert, that, while all other political revolutions, reforms, and improvements have been in various ways of the nature of palliatives and alleviations of systems essentially and irremediably vicious, this alone is the great discovery in political science ; the Newtonian theory of government, toward which the minds of all honest and sagacious statesmen in other times had strained, but without success ; the practical fulfilment of all the theories of political perfection, which had amused the speculations and eluded the grasp of every former period and people. And although assuredly this festive hour affords but little scope for dry disquisition, and shall not be engrossed by me with abstract speculation, yet I shall not think I wander from the duties of the day, in dwelling briefly on the chain of ideas, by which we reach this great conclusion.

The political organization of a people is of all matters of temporal concernment the most important. Drawn together into that great assemblage, which we call a nation, by the social principle, some mode of organization must exist among men ; and on that organization depends more directly, more collectively, more permanently, than on any thing else, the condition of the individual members that make up the community. On the political organization, in which a people shall for generations have been reared, it mainly depends, whether we shall behold in one of the brethren of the human family the New Hollander, making a nauseous meal from the worms which he extracts from a piece

of rotten wood;* or the African cutting out the under jaw of his captive to be strung on a wire, as a trophy of victory, while the mangled wretch is left to bleed to death, on the field of battle;† or whether we shall behold him social, civilized, christian; scarcely faded from that perfect image, in which at the divine purpose, "Let us make man,"

" — in beauty clad,
With health in every vein,
And reason throned upon his brow,
Stepped forth immortal man."

I am certainly aware that between the individuals, that compose a nation, and the nation as an organized body, there are action and reaction;—that if political institutions affect the individual, individuals are sometimes gifted with power, and seize on opportunities, most essentially to modify institutions; nor am I at all disposed to agitate the scholastic question, which was first, in the order of nature or time, men forming governments or governments determining the condition of men. But having long acted and reacted upon each other, it needs no argument to prove, that political institutions get to be infinitely the most important agent in fixing the condition of individuals, and even in determining in what manner and to what extent individual capacity shall be exerted and individual character formed. While other causes do unquestionably operate,—some of them, such as national descent, physical race, climate, and geographical position, very powerfully; yet of none of them is the effect constant, uniform and prompt;—while I believe it is impossible to point out an important change in the political organization of people, a change by which it has been rendered more or less favorable to liberty, without discovering a correspondent effect on their prosperity.

* Malthus's Essay on Population, vol. i. p. 33, Amer. ed.

† Edwards's History of the West Indies, vol. ii. p. 68, 3d ed.

Such is the infinite importance to the nations of men of the political organization which prevails among them. The most momentous practical question therefore of course is, in what way a people shall determine the political organization under which it will live; or in still broader terms, what is a right foundation of government. Till the establishment of the American constitutions, this question had received but one answer in the world; I mean but one, which obtained for any length of time and among any numerous people; and that answer was, force. The right of the strongest was the only footing on which the governments of the ancient and modern nations were in fact placed; and the only effort of the theorists was, to disguise the simple and somewhat startling doctrine of the right of the strongest, by various mystical or popular fictions, which in no degree altered its real nature. Of these the only two worthy to detain us, on the present occasion, are those of the two great English political parties, the whigs and the tories, as they are called, by names not unlike, in dignity and significance, to the doctrines which are designated by them. The tories taught that the only foundation of government was "divine right;" and this is the same notion, which is still inculcated on the continent of Europe; though the delicate ears of the age are flattered by the somewhat milder term, legitimacy. The whigs maintained, that the foundation of government was an "original contract;" but of this contract the existing organization was the record and the evidence; and the obligation was perpetually binding. It may deserve the passing remark, therefore, that in reality the doctrine of the whigs in England is a little less liberal than that of the tories. To say that the will of God is the warrant, by which the king and his hereditary counsellors govern the land, is, to be sure, in a practical sense, what the illustrious sage of the revolution, surviving in our neighborhood, dared as early as 1765, to pronounce it, "dark ribaldry." But in a merely speculative sense it may, without offence, be said, that government, like

every thing else, subsists by the Divine will; and in this acceptation, there is a certain elevation and unction in the sentiment. But to say that the form of government is matter of original compact with the people; that my ancestors, ages ago, agreed that they and their posterity, to the end of time, should give up to a certain line of princes the rule of the state; that no right remains of revising this compact; that nothing but extreme necessity, a necessity which it is reasonable even to attempt to define beforehand, justifies a departure from this compact, in which no provision is made that the will of the majority should be done, but the contrary;—a doctrine like this, as it seems to me, while it is in substance as servile as the other, has the disadvantage of affecting a liberality not borne out by the truth.

And now, fellow citizens, I think I speak the words of truth and soberness, without color or exaggeration, when I say, that before the establishment of our American constitutions, this tory doctrine of the divine right was the most common, and this whig doctrine of the original contract was professedly the most liberal doctrine, ever maintained by any political party in any powerful state. I do not mean that in some of the little Grecian republics, during their short-lived noon of liberty and glory, nothing better was practised; nor that, in other times and places, speculative politicians had not in their closets dreamed of a better foundation of government. But I do mean, that, whereas the whigs in England are the party of politicians who have enjoyed, by general consent, the credit of inculcating a more liberal system, this precious notion of the compact is the extent to which their liberality went.

It is plain, whichever of these solemn phrases—"divine right" or "original compact"—we may prefer to use, that the right of the strongest lies at the foundation of both, in the same way and to the same degree. The doctrine of the divine right gives to the ruler authority to sustain himself against the people, not merely because resistance is unlawful, but because it is sa-

crilegious. The doctrine of the compact denounces every attempted change in the person of the prince as a breach of faith, and as such also not only treasonable but immoral. When a conflict ensues, force alone, of course, decides which party shall prevail; and when force has so decided, all the sanctions of the divine will and of the social compact revive in favor of the successful party. Even the statute legislation of England, although somewhat coy of unveiling the chaste mysteries of the common law, allows the successful usurper to claim the allegiance of the subject, in as full a manner as it could be done by a lawful sovereign.

Nothing is wanting to fill up this sketch of other governments, but to consider what is the form in which force is exercised to sustain them; and this is that of a standing army;—at this moment, the chief support of every government on earth, except our own. As popular violence,—the unrestrained and irresistible force of the mass of men, long oppressed and late awakened, and bursting in its wrath all barriers of law and humanity,—is unhappily the usual instrument by which the intolerable abuses of a corrupt government are removed; so the same blind force of the same fearful multitude, designedly kept in ignorance both of their duty and their privileges as citizens, employed in a form somewhat different indeed, but far more dreadful, that of a mercenary standing army, is the instrument by which corrupt governments are sustained. The deplorable scenes which marked the earlier stages of the French revolution have called the attention of this age to the fearful effects of popular violence; and the minds of men have recoiled at the dismay which leads the van, and the desolation which marks the progress of an infuriated mob. But the power of the mob is transient; the rising sun most commonly scatters its mistrustful ranks; the difficulty of subsistence drives its members asunder; and it is only while it exists in mass, that it is terrible. But there is a form, in which the mob is indeed portentous; when to all its

native terrors it adds the force of a frightful permanence; when, by a regular organization, its strength is so curiously divided, and by a strict discipline its parts are so easily combined, that each and every portion of it carries in its presence the strength and terror of the whole; and when, instead of that want of concert which renders the common mob incapable of arduous enterprises, it is despotically swayed by a single master mind, and may be moved in array across the globe.

I remember to have seen the two kinds of mob brought into direct collision. I was present at the second great meeting of the populace of London, in 1819, in the midst of a crowd of I know not how many thousands, but assuredly a vast multitude, which was gathered together in Smithfield market. The universal distress, as you recollect, was extreme; it was a short time after the scenes at Manchester, at which men's minds were ulcerated;—deaths by starvation were said not to be rare;—ruin by the stagnation of business was general;—and some were already brooding over the dark project of assassinating the ministers, which was not long after matured by Thistlewood and his associates; some of whom, on the day to which I allude, harangued this excited, desperate, starving assemblage. When I considered the state of feeling prevailing in the multitude around me—when I looked in their lowering faces,—heard their deep indignant exclamations,—reflected on the physical force concentrated, probably that of thirty or forty thousand able-bodied men; and added to all this, that they were assembled to exercise an undoubted privilege of British citizens; I did suppose that any small number of troops, who should attempt to interrupt them, would be immolated on the spot. While I was musing on these things, and turning in my mind the common-places on the terrors of a mob, a trumpet was heard to sound—an uncertain, but a harsh and clamorous blast. I looked that the surrounding stalls should have furnished the unarmed multitude at least with

that weapon, with which Virginius sacrificed his daughter to the liberty of Rome; I looked that the flying pavement should begin to darken the air. Another blast is heard—a cry of “The horseguards!” ran through the assembled thousands; the orators on the platform were struck mute; and the whole of that mighty host of starving, desperate men incontinently took to their heels; in which, I must confess—feeling no vocation, in that cause to be faithful found, among the faithless—I did myself join them. We had run through the Old Bailey and reached Ludgate hill, before we found out, that we had been put to flight by a single mischievous tool of power, who had come triumphing down the opposite street on horseback, blowing a stage-coachman’s horn.

We have heard of those midnight scenes of desolation, when the populace of some overgrown capital, exhausted by the extremity of political oppression, or famishing at the gates of luxurious palaces, or kindled by some transport of fanatical zeal, rushes out to find the victims of its fury; the lurid glare of torches, casting their gleams on faces dark with rage; the ominous din of the alarm bell, striking with affright, on the broken visions of the sleepers; the horrid yells, the thrilling screams, the multitudinous roar of the living storm, as it sweeps onward to its objects;—but oh, the disciplined, the paid, the honored mob; not moving in rags and starvation to some act of blood or plunder; but marching, in all the pomp and circumstance of war, to lay waste a feeble state; or cantoned at home among an overawed and broken-spirited people! I have read of granaries plundered, of castles sacked, and their inmates cruelly murdered, by the ruthless hands of the mob. I have read of friendly states ravaged, governments overturned, tyrannies founded and upheld, proscriptions executed, fruitful regions turned into trampled deserts, the tide of civilization thrown back, and a line of generations cursed, by a well organized system of military force.

Such was the foundation in theory and in practice

of all the governments, which can be considered as having had a permanent existence in the world, before the Revolution in this country. There are certainly shades of difference between the oriental despotisms, ancient and modern—the military empire of Rome—the feudal sovereignties of the middle ages—and the legitimate monarchies of the present day. Some were and are more, and some less, susceptible of melioration in practice; and of all of them it might perhaps be said—being all in some degree bad,

“That, which is best administered, is best.”

In no one of these governments, nor in any government, was the truth admitted that the only just foundation of all government is the will of the people. If it ever occurred to the practical or theoretical politician, that such an idea deserved examination, the experiment was thought to have been made in the republics of Greece, and to have failed, as fail it certainly did, from the physical impossibility of conducting the business of the state by the actual intervention of every citizen. Such a plan of government must of course fail, if for no other reason, at least for this, that it would prevent the citizen from pursuing his own business, which it is the object of all government to enable him to do. It was considered then as settled, that the citizens, each and all, could not be the government; some one or more must discharge its duties for them. Who shall do this;—how shall they be designated?

The first king was a fortunate soldier, and the first nobleman was one of his generals; and government has passed by descent to their posterity, with no other interruption, than has taken place, when some new soldier of fortune has broken in upon this line of succession, in favor of himself and of his generals. The people have passed for nothing in the plan; and whenever it has occurred to a busy genius to put the question, By what right government is thus exercised and

transmitted? the common answer has been, By Divine right; while, in times of rare illumination, men have been consoled with the assurance, that such was the original contract.

But a brighter day and a better dispensation were in reserve. The founders of the feudal system, barbarous, arbitrary, and despotic as they were, and profoundly ignorant of political science, were animated themselves with a spirit of personal liberty; out of which, after ages of conflict, grew up a species of popular representation. In the eye of the feudal system, the king was the first baron, and standing within his own sphere, each other baron was as good as the first. From this important notion, in which the feudal lords of England claimed to stand to their prince, arose the practice of their being consulted by him, in great and difficult conjunctures of affairs, and hence the co-operation of a grand council, (subsequently convened in two houses under the name of parliament,) in making the laws and administering the government. The formation of this body has proved a great step in the progress of popular rights; its influence has been decisive in breaking the charm of absolute monarchy, and giving to a body, partially eligible by the people, a share in the government. It has also operated most auspiciously on liberty, by exhibiting to the world, on the theatre of a conspicuous nation, a living example, that in proportion as the rights and interests of a people are represented in a government, in that degree the state becomes strong and prosperous. Thus far the science and the practice of government had gone in England, and here it had come to a stand. An equal representation, even in the House of Commons, was unthought of; or thought of only as one of the exploded abominations of Cromwell. It is asserted by Mr. Hume, writing about the middle of the last century, and weighing this subject with equal moderation and sagacity, that "the tide has run long and with some rapidity to the side of popular government, and is just beginning to turn toward monarchy." And he

maintains that the British constitution is, though slowly, yet gradually verging toward an absolute government.*

Such was the state of political science, when the independence of our country was declared, and its constitutions organized on the basis of that declaration. The precedents in favor of a popular system were substantially these, the short-lived prosperity of the republics of Greece, where each citizen took part in the conduct of affairs; and the admission into the British government, of one branch of the legislature nominally elective, and operating, rather by opinion than power, as a partial check on the other branches. What lights these precedents gave them, our fathers had; beyond this, they owed every thing to their own wisdom and courage, in daring to carry out and apply to the executive branch of the government that system of delegated power, of which the elements existed in their own provincial assemblies. They assumed, at once, not as a matter to be reached by argumentation, but as the dictate of unaided reason—as an axiom too obvious to be discussed, though never in practice applied—that where the state is too large to be governed by an actual assembly of all the citizens, the people shall elect those, who will act for them, in making the laws and administering the government. They, therefore, laid the basis of their constitutions in a proportionate delegation of power, from every part of the community; and regarding the declaration of our Independence as the true era of our institutions, we are authorized to assert, that from that era dates the establishment of the only perfect organization of government, that of a Representative Republic, administered by persons freely chosen by the people.

This plan of government is therefore, in its theory, perfect; and in its operation it is perfect also;—that is to say, no measure of policy, public or private, domestic or foreign, can long be pursued, against the

* Hume's Essays, vol. I.

will of a majority of the people. Farther than this the wisdom of government cannot go. The majority of the people may err. Man collectively as well as individually, is man still; but whom can you more safely trust than the majority of the people; who is so likely to be right, always right, and altogether right, as the collective majority of a great nation, represented in all its interests and pursuits, and in all its communities?

Thus has been solved the great problem in human affairs; and a frame of government, perfect in its principles, has been brought down from the airy regions of Utopia, and has found 'a local habitation and a name' in our country. Henceforward we have only to strive that the practical operation of our systems may be true to their spirit and theory. Henceforth it may be said of us, what never could have been said of any people, since the world began,—be our sufferings what they will, no one can attribute them to our frame of government; no one can point out a principle in our political systems, of which he has had reason to complain; no one can sigh for a change in his country's institutions, as a boon to be desired for himself or for his children. There is not an apparent defect in our constitutions which could be removed without introducing a greater one; nor a real evil, whose removal would not be rather a nearer approach to the principles on which they are founded, than a departure from them.

And what, fellow citizens, are to be the fruits to us and to the world, of the establishment of this perfect system of government? I might partly answer the inquiry, by reminding you what have been the fruits to us and to the world; by inviting you to compare our beloved country, as it is, in extent of settlement, in numbers and resources, in the useful and ornamental arts, in the abundance of the common blessings of life, in the general standard of character, in the means of education, in the institutions for social objects, in the various great industrious interests, in public strength

and national respectability, with what it was in all these respects fifty years ago. But the limits of this occasion will not allow us to engage in such an enumeration; and it will be amply sufficient for us to contemplate, in its principle, the beneficial operation on society, of the form of government bequeathed to us by our fathers. This principle is Equality; the equal enjoyment by every citizen of the rights and privileges of the social union.

The principle of all other governments is monopoly, exclusion, favor. They secure great privileges to a small number, and necessarily at the expense of all the rest of the citizens.

In the keen conflict of minds, which preceded and accompanied the political convulsions of the last generation, the first principles of society were canvassed with a boldness and power before unknown in Europe, and, from the great principle that all men are equal, it was for the first time triumphantly inferred, as a necessary consequence, that the will of a majority of the people is the rule of government. To meet these doctrines, so appalling in their tendency to the existing institutions of Europe, new ground was also taken by the champions of those institutions, and particularly by a man, whose genius, eloquence, and integrity gave a currency, which nothing else could have given, to his splendid paradoxes and servile doctrines. In one of his renowned productions,* this great man, for great, even in his errors, most assuredly he was, in order to meet the inferences drawn from the equality of man, that the will of the majority must be the rule of government, has undertaken, as he says, "to fix, with some degree of distinctness, an idea of what it is we mean when we say the PEOPLE;" and in fulfilment of this design, he lays it down, "that in a state of rude nature, there is no such thing as a people." A number of men, in themselves, can have no collective capacity. The idea of a people is the idea of a corporation, it is

* The appeal from the New to the Old Whigs.

wholly artificial; and made, like all other legal fictions, by common agreement."

"In a state of rude nature, there is no such thing as a people!" I would fain learn in what corner of the earth, rude or civilized, men are to be found, who are not a people, more or less improved. "A number of men in themselves have no collective capacity!" I would gladly be told where, in what region, I will not say of geography, I know there is none such, but of poetry or romance, a number of men has been placed, by nature, each standing alone, and not bound by any of those ties of blood, affinity and language, which form the rudiments of a collective capacity. "The idea of a people is the idea of a corporation, it is wholly artificial, and made like all other legal fictions, by common agreement." Indeed, is the social principle artificial? Is the gift of articulate speech, which enables man to impart his condition to man, the organized sense, which enables him to comprehend what is imparted—is that sympathy, which subjects our opinions and feelings, and through them our conduct, to the influence of others and their conduct to our influence—is that chain of cause and effect, which makes our characters receive impressions from the generations before us, and puts it in our power, by a good or bad precedent, to distil a poison or a balm into the characters of posterity—are these, indeed, all by-laws of a corporation? Are all the feelings of ancestry, posterity, and fellow citizenship; all the charm, veneration, and love, bound up in the name of *country*; the delight, the enthusiasm, with which we seek out, after the lapse of generations and ages, the traces of our fathers' bravery or wisdom, are these all "a legal fiction?" Is it, indeed, a legal fiction, that moistens the eye of the solitary traveller, when he meets a countryman in a foreign land? Is it a "common agreement," that gives its meaning to my mother tongue, and enables me to speak to the hearts of my kindred men, beyond the rivers and beyond the mountains? Yes, it is a common agreement; record-

ed on the same registry with that, which marshals the winged nations, that,

In common, ranged in figure, wedge their way,
Intelligent of seasons ; and set forth
Their airy caravan, high over seas
Flying, and over lands, with mutual wing
Easing their flight.

The mutual dependence of man on man, family on family, interest on interest, is but a chapter in the great law, not of corporations, but of nature. The law, by which commerce, manufactures, and agriculture support each other, is the same law, in virtue of which the thirsty earth owes its fertility to the rivers and the rains ; and the clouds derive their high-travelling waters from the rising vapors ; and the ocean is fed from the secret springs of the mountains ; and the plant that grows derives its increase from the plant that decays ; and all subsist and thrive, not by themselves but by others, in the great political economy of nature. The necessary cohesion of the parts of the political system is no more artificial, than the gravity of the natural system, in which planet is bound to planet, and all to the sun, and the sun to all. Insulate an interest in society, a family, or a man, and all the faculties and powers they possess will avail them little toward the great objects of life ; in like manner, as not all the mysteriously combined elements of the earth around and beneath us, the light and volatile airs, that fill the atmosphere ; not the electric fluid, which lies condensed and embattled in its cloudy magazines, or subtly diffused through creation ; not the volcanic fires that rage in the earth's bosom, nor all her mines of coal, and nitre and sulphur ; nor fountains of naphtha, petroleum, or asphaltus ;—not all, combined and united, afford one beam of that common light, which sends man forth from his labors, and which is the sun's contribution to the system, in which we live. And yet the great natural system, the political, intellectual, moral

system, is artificial, as a legal fiction ! "O that mine enemy had said it," the admirers of Mr. Burke may well exclaim. O that some impious Voltaire, some ruthless Rousseau had uttered it. Had uttered it ! Rousseau did utter the same thing ; and more rebuked than any other error of this misguided genius, is his doctrine of the Social Contract, of which Burke has reasserted, and more than reasserted the principle, in the sentences I have quoted.

But no, fellow citizens ; political society exists by the law of nature. Man is formed for it ; every man is formed for it ; every man has an equal right to its privileges, and to be deprived of them, under whatever pretence, is so far to be reduced to slavery. The authors of the Declaration of Independence saw this, and taught that all men are born free and equal. On this principle, our constitutions rest ; and no constitution can bind a people on any other principle. No original contract, that gives away this right, can bind any but the parties to it. My forefathers could not, if they had wished, have stipulated to their king, that his children should rule over their children. By the introduction of this principle of equality it is, that the Declaration of Independence has at once effected a before unimagined extension of social privileges. Grant that no new blessing (which, however, can by no means with truth be granted,) be introduced into the world on this plan of equality, still it will have discharged the inestimable office of communicating, in equal proportion, to all the citizens, those privileges of the social union, which were before partitioned in an invidious gradation, profusely among the privileged orders, and parsimoniously among all the rest. Let me instance in the right of suffrage. The enjoyment of this right enters largely into the happiness of the social condition. I do not mean, that it is necessary to our happiness actually to exercise this right at every election ; but I say, the right itself to give our voice in the choice of public servants, and the management of public affairs, is so precious, so inestimable, that there is not

a citizen who hears me, that would not lay down his life to assert it. This is a right unknown in every country but ours; I say unknown, because in England, whose institutions make the nearest approach to a popular character, the elective suffrage is not only incredibly unequal and capricious in its distribution; but extends, after all, only to the choice of a minority of one house of the legislature. Thus then the people of this country are, by their constitutions of government, endowed with a new source of enjoyment, elsewhere almost unknown; a great and substantial happiness; an unalloyed happiness. Most of the desirable things of life bear a high price in the world's market. Every thing usually deemed a great good, must, for its attainment, be weighed down, in the opposite scale, with what is as usually deemed a great evil—labor, care, danger. It is only the unbought, spontaneous, essential circumstances of our nature and condition, that yield a liberal enjoyment. Our religious hopes, intellectual meditations, social sentiments, family affections, political privileges, these are springs of unpurchased happiness; and to condemn men to live under an arbitrary government, is to cut them off from nearly all the satisfactions, which nature designed should flow from those principles within us, by which a tribe of kindred men is constituted a people.

But it is not merely an extension to all the members of society, of those blessings, which, under other systems, are monopolized by a few;—great and positive improvements, I feel sure, are destined to flow from the introduction of the republican system. The first of these will be, to make wars less frequent, and finally to cause them to cease altogether. It was not a republican, it was the subject of a monarchy, and no patron of novelties, who said,

War is a game, which, were their subjects wise,
Kings would not play at.

A great majority of the wars, which have desolated
VOL. V.

mankind, have grown either out of the disputed titles and rival claims of sovereigns, or their personal character, particularly their ambition, or the character of their favorites, or some other circumstance evidently incident to a form of government which withholds from the people the ultimate control of affairs. And the more civilized men grow, strange as it may seem, the more universally is this the case. In the barbarous ages the people pursued war as an occupation; its plunder was more profitable, than their labor at home, in the state of general insecurity. In modern times, princes raise their soldiers by conscription, their sailors by impressment, and drive them at the point of the bayonet and dirk, into the battles they fight for reasons of state. But in a republic, where the people, by their representatives, must vote the declaration of war, and afterwards raise the means of its support, none but wars of just and necessary defence can be waged. Republics, we are told, indeed, are ambitious,—a seemingly wise remark, devoid of meaning. Man is ambitious; and the question is, where will his ambition be most likely to drive his country into war; in a monarchy where he has but to ‘cry havoc, and let slip the dogs of war,’ or in a republic, where he must get the vote of a strong majority of the nation? Let history furnish the answer. The book, which promised you, in its title, a picture of the progress of the human family, turns out to be a record, not of the human family, but of the Macedonian family, the Julian family, the families of York and Lancaster, of Lorraine and Bourbon. We need not go to the ancient annals to confirm this remark. We need not speak of those, who reduced Asia and Africa, in the morning of the world, to a vassallage from which they have never recovered. We need not dwell on the more notorious exploits of the Alexanders and the Cæsars, the men who wept for other worlds to visit with the pestilence of their arms. We need not run down the bloody line of the dark ages, when the barbarous North disordered her ambitious savages on Eu-

rope, or when at a later period, barbarous Europe poured back her holy ruffians on Asia; we need but look at the dates of modern history,—the history of civilized, balanced Europe. We here behold the ambition of Charles V. involving the continent of Europe in war, for the first half of the sixteenth century, and the fiendlike malignity of Catherine de' Medici and her kindred distracting it the other half. We see the haughty and cheerless bigotry of Philip, persevering in a conflict of extermination for one whole age in the Netherlands, and darkening the English channel with his armada; while France prolongs her civil dissensions, because Henry IV. was the twenty-second cousin of Henry III. We enter the seventeenth century, and again find the hereditary pride and bigotry of the House of Austria wasting Germany and the neighboring powers with the Thirty Years' war; and before the peace of Westphalia is concluded, England is plunged into the fiery trial of her militant liberties. Contemporaneously, the civil wars are revived in France, and the kingdom is blighted by the passions of Mazarin. The civil wars are healed, and the atrocious career of Louis XIV. begins; a half century of bloodshed and woe, that stands in revolting contrast with the paltry pretences of his wars. At length the peace of Ryswic is made in 1697, and bleeding Europe throws off the harness and lies down like an exhausted giant to repose. In three years, the testament of a doating Spanish king gives the signal for the Succession war; till a cup of tea spilt on Mrs. Masham's apron, restores peace to the afflicted kingdoms. Meantime the madman of the North had broken loose upon the world, and was running his frantic round. Peace at length is restored, and with one or two short wars, it remains unbroken, till, in 1740, the will of Charles VI. occasions another testamentary contest; and in the gallant words of the stern but relenting moralist,

The queen, the beauty, sets the world in arms.

Eight years are this time sufficient to exhaust the

combatants, and the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle is concluded, but, in 1755, the old French war is kindled in our own wilderness, and through the united operation of the monopolizing spirit of England, the party intrigues of France, and the ambition of Frederic, spread throughout Europe. The wars of the last generation I need not name, nor dwell on that signal retribution, by which the political ambition of the cabinets at length conjured up the military ambition of the astonishing individual, who seems, in our day, to have risen out of the ranks of the people, to chastise the privileged orders with that iron scourge, with which they had so long afflicted mankind; to gather with his strong Plebeian hands the fragrance of those palmy honors, which they had reared for three centuries in the bloody gardens of their royalty. It may well be doubted, whether, under a government like ours, one of all these contests would have taken place. Those that arose from disputed titles, and bequests of thrones, could not of course have existed; and making every allowance for the effect of popular delusion, it seems to me not possible, that a representative government would have embarked in any of the wars of ambition and aggrandizement, which fill up the catalogue.

Who then are these families and individuals—these royal *lanista*—by whom the nations are kept in training for a long gladiatorial combat? Are they better, wiser than we? Look at them in life; what are they? “Kings are fond,” says Mr. Burke, no scoffer at thrones, “kings are fond of low company.”* What are they when gone? *Expende Hannibalem*. Enter the great cathedrals of Europe, and contemplate the sepulchres of the men, who claimed to be the lords of each successive generation. Question your own feelings, as you behold where the Plantagenets and Tudors, the Stuarts and those of Brunswick, lie mournfully huddled up in the chapels of Westminster Abbey; and com-

* Speech on Economical Reform.

pare those feelings with the homage you pay to Heaven's aristocracy,—the untitled learning, genius, and wit that moulder by their side. Count over the sixty-six emperors and princes of the Austrian house, that lie gathered in the dreary pomp of monumental marble, in the vaults of the Capuchins at Vienna; and weigh the worth of their dust against the calamities of their Peasants' war, their Thirty Years' war, their Succession war, their wars to enforce the Pragmatic Sanction, and of all the other uncouth pretences for destroying mankind, with which they have plagued the world.

But the cessation of wars, to which we look forward as the result of the gradual diffusion of republican government, is but the commencement of the social improvements, which cannot but flow from the same benignant source. It has been justly said that he was a great benefactor of mankind, who could make two blades of grass grow, where one grew before. But our fathers, our fathers were the benefactors of mankind, who brought into action such a vast increase of physical, political, and moral energy; who have made not two citizens to live only, but hundreds, yea, unnumbered thousands to live, and to prosper in regions, which but for their achievements would have remained for ages unsettled, and to enjoy those rights of men, which but for their institutions would have continued to be arrogated, as the exclusive inheritance of a few. I appeal to the fact. I ask any sober judge of political probability to tell me, whether more has not been done to extend the domain of civilization, in fifty years, since the declaration of independence, than would have been done in five centuries of continued colonial subjection. It is not even a matter of probability; the king in council had adopted it, as a maxim of his American policy, that no settlements in this country should be made beyond the Alleghanies;—that the design of Providence in spreading out the fertile valley of the Mississippi, should not be fulfilled.

I know that it is said, in palliation of the restrictive influence of European governments, that they are as good as their subjects can bear. I know it is said, that it would be useless and pernicious to call on the half savage and brutified peasantry of many countries, to take a share in the administration of affairs, by electing or being elected to office. I know they are unfit for it; it is the very curse of the system. What is it that unfits them? What is it that makes slavish labor, and slavish ignorance, and slavish stupidity, their necessary heritage? Are they not made of the same Caucasian clay? Have they not five senses, the same faculties, the same passions? And is it any thing but an aggravation of the vice of arbitrary governments, that they first deprive men of their rights, and then unfit them to exercise those rights; profanely construing the effect into a justification of the evil?

The influence of our institutions on foreign nations is—next to their effect on our own condition—the most interesting question we can contemplate. With our example of popular government before their eyes, the nations of the earth will not eventually be satisfied with any other. With the French revolution as a beacon to guide them, they will learn, we may hope, not to embark too rashly on the mounting waves of reform. The cause, however, of popular government is rapidly gaining in the world. In England, education is carrying it wide and deep into society. On the continent, written constitutions of governments, nominally representative,—though as yet, it must be owned, nominally so alone,—are adopted in eight or ten, late absolute monarchies; and it is not without good grounds that we may trust, that the indifference with which the Christian powers contemplate the sacrifice of Greece, and their crusade against the constitutions of Spain, Piedmont and Naples, will satisfy the mass of thinking men in Europe, that it is time to put an end to these cruel delusions, and take their own government into their own hands.

But the great triumphs of constitutional freedom, to which our independence has furnished the example, have been witnessed in the southern portion of our hemisphere. Sunk to the last point of colonial degradation, they have risen at once into the organization of free republics. Their struggle has been arduous; and eighteen years of chequered fortune have not yet brought it to a close. But we must not infer, from their prolonged agitation, that their independence is uncertain; that they have prematurely put on the *tega virilis* of Freedom. They have not begun too soon; they have more to do. Our war of independence was shorter;—happily we were contending with a government, that could not, like that of Spain, pursue an interminable and hopeless contest, in defiance of the people's will. Our transition to a mature and well adjusted constitution was more prompt than that of our sister republics; for the foundations had long been settled, the preparation long made. And when we consider that it is our example, which has aroused the spirit of Independence from California to Cape Horn; that the experiment of liberty, if it had failed with us, most surely would not have been attempted by them; that even now our counsels and acts will operate as powerful precedents in this great family of republics, we learn the importance of the part which Providence has assigned us in the world. A wise and harmonious administration of the public affairs,—a faithful, liberal and patriotic exercise of the private duties of the citizen,—while they secure our happiness at home, will diffuse a healthful influence through the channels of national communication, and serve the cause of liberty beyond the Equator and the Andes. When we show an united, conciliatory, and imposing front to their rising states, we show them, better than sounding eulogies can do, the true aspect of an independent republic. We give them a living example, that the fireside policy of a people is like that of the in-

dividual man. As the one, commencing in the prudence, order and industry of the private circle, extends itself to all the duties of social life, of the family, the neighborhood, the country; so the true domestic policy of the republic, beginning in the wise organization of its own institutions, pervades its territories with a vigilant, prudent, temperate administration; and extends the hand of cordial interest to all the friendly nations, especially to those which are of the household of liberty.

It is in this way, that we are to fulfil our destiny in the world. The greatest engine of moral power, which human nature knows, is an organized, prosperous state. All that man, in his individual capacity, can do—all that he can effect by his fraternities—by his ingenious discoveries and wonders of art—or by his influence over others—is as nothing, compared with the collective, perpetuated influence on human affairs and human happiness of a well constituted, powerful commonwealth. It blesses generations with its sweet influence;—even the barren earth seems to pour out its fruits under a system where property is secure, while her fairest gardens are blighted by despotism;—men, thinking, reasoning men, abound beneath its benignant sway,—nature enters into a beautiful accord, a better, purer *asiento* with man, and guides an industrious citizen to every rood of her smiling wastes;—and we see, at length, that what has been called a state of nature, has been most falsely, calumniously so denominated; that the nature of man is neither that of a savage, a hermit, nor a slave; but that of a member of a well ordered family, that of a good neighbor, a free citizen, a well informed, good man, acting with others like him. This is the lesson which is taught in the charter of our independence; this is the lesson, which our example is to teach the world.

The epic poet of Rome—the faithful subject of an absolute prince—in unfolding the duties and destinies

of his countrymen, bids them look down with disdain on the polished and intellectual arts of Greece, and deem their arts to be

To rule the nations with imperial sway ;
To spare the tribes that yield ; fight down the proud ;
And force the mood of peace upon the world.

A nobler counsel breathes from the charter of our independence; a happier province belongs to our free republic. Peace we would extend, but by persuasion and example,—the moral force, by which alone it can prevail among the nations. Wars we may encounter, but it is in the sacred character of the injured and the wronged; to raise the trampled rights of humanity from the dust; to rescue the mild form of Liberty, from her abode among the prisons and the scaffolds of the elder world, and to seat her in the chair of state among her adoring children;—to give her beauty for ashes; a healthful action for her cruel agony; to put at last a period to her warfare on earth; to tear her star-spangled banner from the perilous ridges of battle, and plant it on the rock of ages. There be it fixed forever,—the power of a free people slumbering in its folds, their peace reposing in its shade!]

A DISCOURSE,
IN COMMEMORATION OF THE LIVES AND SERVICES OF
JOHN ADAMS AND THOMAS JEFFERSON,
DELIVERED IN FANEUIL HALL, BOSTON, AUGUST 2, 1826 :
BY DANIEL WEBSTER.

—●●—

This is an unaccustomed spectacle. For the first time, fellow-citizens, badges of mourning shroud the columns and overhang the arches of this Hall. These walls, which were consecrated, so long ago, to the cause of American liberty, which witnessed her infant struggles, and rung with the shouts of her earliest victories, proclaim, now, that distinguished friends and champions of the great cause have fallen. It is right that it should be thus. The tears which flow, and the honors that are paid, when the Founders of the Republic die, give hope that the Republic itself may be immortal. It is fit, that by public assembly and solemn observance, by anthem and by eulogy, we commemorate the services of national benefactors, extol their virtues, and render thanks to God for eminent blessings, early given and long continued, to our favored country.

Adams and Jefferson are no more; and we are assembled, fellow-citizens, the aged, the middle aged and the young, by the spontaneous impulse of all, under the authority of the municipal government, with the presence of the Chief Magistrate of the Commonwealth, and others its official representatives, the university, and the learned societies, to bear our part, in those manifestations of respect and gratitude which universally pervade the land. Adams and Jefferson are no more. On our fiftieth anniversary, the great day of National Jubilee, in the very hour of public rejoicing, in the midst of echoing and re-echoing voices

of thanksgiving, while their own names were on all tongues, they took their flight, together, to the world of spirits.

If it be true that no one can safely be pronounced happy while he lives; if that event which terminates life can alone crown its honors and its glory, what felicity is here! The great Epic of their lives, how happily concluded! Poetry itself has hardly closed illustrious lives, and finished the career of earthly renown, by such a consummation. If we had the power, we could not wish to reverse this dispensation of the Divine Providence. The great objects of life were accomplished, the drama was ready to be closed; it has closed; our patriots have fallen; but so fallen, at such age, with such coincidence, on such a day, that we cannot rationally lament that that end has come, which we knew could not be long deferred.

Neither of these great men, fellow-citizens, could have died, at any time, without leaving an immense void in our American society. They have been so intimately, and for so long a time, blended with the history of the country, and especially so united, in our thoughts and recollections, with the events of the Revolution, that the death of either would have touched the strings of public sympathy. We should have felt that one great link, connecting us with former times, was broken; that we had lost something more, as it were, of the presence of the Revolution itself, and of the act of independence, and were driven on, by another great remove, from the days of our country's early distinction, to meet posterity, and to mix with the future. Like the mariner, whom the ocean and the winds carry along, till he sees the stars which have directed his course, and lighted his pathless way, descend, one by one, beneath the rising horizon, we should have felt that the stream of time had borne us onward, till another great luminary, whose light had cheered us, and whose guidance we had followed, had sunk away from our sight.

But the concurrence of their death, on the anniver-

sary of independence, has naturally awakened stronger emotions. Both had been presidents, both had lived to great age, both were early patriots, and both were distinguished and ever honored by their immediate agency in the act of independence. It cannot but seem striking, and extraordinary, that these two should live to see the fiftieth year from the date of that act; that they should complete that year; and that then, on the day which had fast linked forever their own fame with their country's glory, the heavens should open to receive them both at once. As their lives themselves were the gifts of Providence, who is not willing to recognize in their happy termination, as well as in their long continuance, proofs that our country, and its benefactors, are objects of His care?

Adams and Jefferson, I have said, are no more. As human beings, indeed, they are no more. They are no more, as in 1776, bold and fearless advocates of independence; no more as on subsequent periods, the head of the government; no more as we have recently seen them, aged and venerable objects of admiration and regard. They are no more. They are dead. But how little is there, of the great and good, which can die! To their country they yet live, and live forever. They live in all that perpetuates the remembrance of men on earth; in the recorded proofs of their own great actions, in the offspring of their intellect, in the deep engraved lines of public gratitude, and in the respect and homage of mankind. They live in their example; and they live, emphatically, and will live in the influence which their lives and efforts, their principles and opinions, now exercise, and will continue to exercise, on the affairs of men, not only in their own country, but throughout the civilized world. A superior and commanding human intellect, a truly great man, when Heaven vouchsafes so rare a gift, is not a temporary flame, burning bright for a while, and then expiring, giving place to returning darkness. It is rather a spark of fervent heat, as well as radiant light, with power to enkindle the common mass of human

mind; so that when it glimmers, in its own decay, and finally goes out in death, no night follows, but it leaves the world all light, all on fire, from the potent contact of its own spirit. Bacon died; but the human understanding, roused, by the touch of his miraculous wand, to a perception of the true philosophy, and the just mode of inquiring after truth, has kept on its course, successfully and gloriously. Newton died; yet the courses of the spheres are still known, and they yet move on, in the orbits which he saw, and described for them, in the infinity of space.

No two men now live, fellow-citizens, perhaps it may be doubted, whether any two men have ever lived, in one age, who, more than those we now commemorate, have impressed their own sentiments, in regard to politics and government, on mankind, infused their own opinions more deeply into the opinions of others, or given a more lasting direction to the current of human thought. Their work doth not perish with them. The tree which they assisted to plant, will flourish, although they water it and protect it no longer; for it has struck its roots deep, it has sent them to the very centre; no storm, not of force to burst the orb, can overturn it; its branches spread wide; they stretch their protecting arms broader and broader, and its top is destined to reach the heavens. We are not deceived. There is no delusion here. No age will come, in which the American Revolution will appear less than it is, one of the greatest events in human history. No age will come, in which it will cease to be seen and felt, on either continent, that a mighty step, a great advance, not only in American affairs, but in human affairs, was made on the 4th of July, 1776. And no age will come, we trust, so ignorant or so unjust, as not to see and acknowledge the efficient agency of these we now honor, in producing that momentous event.

We are not assembled, therefore, fellow-citizens, as men overwhelmed with calamity by the sudden disruption of the ties of friendship or affection, or as in despair for the Republic, by the untimely blighting of its

hopes. Death has not surprised us by an unseasonable blow. We have, indeed, seen the tomb close, but it has closed only over mature years, over long protracted public service, over the weakness of age, and over life itself only when the ends of living had been fulfilled. These suns, as they rose slowly and steadily, amidst clouds and storms, in their ascendant, so they have not rushed from their meridian, to sink suddenly in the west. Like the mildness, the serenity, the continuing benignity of a summer's day, they have gone down with slow descending, grateful, long lingering light; and now that they are beyond the visible margin of the world, good omens cheer us from 'the bright track of their fiery car!'

There were many points of similarity in the lives and fortunes of these great men. They belonged to the same profession, and had pursued its studies and its practice, for unequal lengths of time indeed, but with diligence and effect. Both were learned and able lawyers. They were natives and inhabitants, respectively, of those two of the colonies, which, at the revolution, were the largest and most powerful, and which naturally had a lead in the political affairs of the times. When the colonies became, in some degree, united, by the assembling of a general congress, they were brought to act together, in its deliberations, not indeed at the same time, but both at early periods. Each had already manifested his attachment to the cause of the country, as well as his ability to maintain it by printed addresses, public speeches, extensive correspondence, and whatever other mode could be adopted, for the purpose of exposing the encroachments of the British parliament and animating the people to a manly resistance. Both were not only decided, but early friends of Independence. While others yet doubted, they were resolved; while others hesitated, they pressed forward. They were both members of the committee for preparing the Declaration of Independence, and they constituted the sub-committee, appointed by the other members to make the draught.

They left their seats in congress, being called to other public employments, at periods not remote from each other, although one of them returned to it, afterwards, for a short time. Neither of them was of the assembly of great men which formed the present constitution, and neither was at any time member of congress under its provisions. Both have been public ministers abroad, both vice-presidents, and both presidents. These coincidences are now singularly crowned and completed. They have died, together; and they died on the anniversary of liberty.

When many of us were last in this place, fellow-citizens, it was on the day of that anniversary. We were met to enjoy the festivities belonging to the occasion, and to manifest our grateful homage to our political fathers.

We did not, we could not here, forget our venerable neighbor of Quincy. We knew that we were standing, at a time of high and palmy prosperity, where he had stood, in the hour of utmost peril; that we saw nothing but liberty and security, where he had met the frown of power; that we were enjoying everything, where he had hazarded everything; and just and sincere plaudits rose to his name, from the crowds which filled this area, and hung over these galleries. He whose grateful duty it was to speak to us, on that day, of the virtues of our fathers had, indeed, admonished us that time and years were about to level his venerable frame with the dust. But he bade us hope, that 'the sound of a nation's joy, rushing from our cities, ringing from our valleys, echoing from our hills, might yet break the silence of his aged ear; that the rising blessings of grateful millions might yet visit, with glad light, his decaying vision.' Alas! that vision was then closing forever. Alas! the silence which was then settling on that aged ear, was an everlasting silence! For, lo! in the very moment of our festivities, his freed spirit ascended to God who gave it! Human aid and human solace terminate at the grave; or we would gladly have borne him upward, on a nation's

outspread hands; we would have accompanied him, and with the blessings of millions and the prayers of millions, commended him to the Divine favor.

While still indulging our thoughts on the coincidence of the death of this venerable man with the anniversary of independence, we learn that Jefferson, too, has fallen; and that these aged patriots, these illustrious fellow-laborers, had left our world together. May not such events raise the suggestion that they are not undesigned, and that Heaven does so order things, as sometimes to attract strongly the attention, and excite the thoughts of men? The occurrence has added new interest to our anniversary, and will be remembered, in all time to come.

The occasion, fellow-citizens, requires some account of the lives and services of John Adams and Thomas Jefferson. This duty must necessarily be performed with great brevity, and in the discharge of it I shall be obliged to confine myself, principally, to those parts of their history and character which belonged to them as public men.

John Adams was born at Quincy, then part of the ancient town of Braintree, on the 19th day of October, (Old Style,) 1735. He was a descendant of the Puritans, his ancestors having early emigrated from England, and settled in Massachusetts. Discovering early a strong love of reading and of knowledge, together with marks of great strength and activity of mind, proper care was taken by his worthy father, to provide for his education. He pursued his youthful studies in Braintree, under Mr. Marsh, a teacher whose fortune it was that Josiah Quincy, Jr. as well as the subject of these remarks, should receive from him his instruction in the rudiments of classical literature. Having been admitted, in 1751, a member of Harvard College, Mr. Adams was graduated, in course, in 1755; and on the catalogue of that Institution, his name, at the time of his death, was second among the living Alumni, being preceded only by that of the venerable Holyoke. With what degree of reputation he left the

University, is not now precisely known. We know only that he was distinguished, in a class which numbered Locke and Hemenway among its members. Choosing the law for his profession, he commenced and prosecuted its studies at Worcester, under the direction of Samuel Putnam, a gentleman whom he has himself described as an acute man, an able and learned lawyer, and as in large professional practice at that time. In 1758, he was admitted to the bar, and commenced business in Braintree. He is understood to have made his first considerable effort, or to have attained his first signal success, at Plymouth, on one of those occasions which furnish the earliest opportunity for distinction to many young men of the profession, a jury trial, and a criminal cause. His business naturally grew with his reputation, and his residence in the vicinity afforded the opportunity, as his growing eminence gave the power, of entering on the larger field of practice which the capital presented. In 1766, he removed his residence to Boston, still continuing his attendance on the neighboring circuits, and not unfrequently called to remote parts of the Province. In 1770, his professional firmness was brought to a test of some severity, on the application of the British officers and soldiers to undertake their defence, on the trial of the indictments found against them on account of the transactions of the memorable 5th of March. He seems to have thought, on this occasion, that a man can no more abandon the proper duties of his profession, than he can abandon other duties. The event proved, that as he judged well for his own reputation, so he judged well, also, for the interest and permanent fame of his country. The result of that trial proved, that notwithstanding the high degree of excitement then existing, in consequence of the measures of the British government, a jury of Massachusetts would not deprive the most reckless enemies, even the officers of that standing army, quartered among them, which they so perfectly abhorred, of any

part of that protection which the law, in its mildest and most indulgent interpretation, afforded to persons accused of crimes.

Without pursuing Mr. Adams' professional course further, suffice it to say, that on the first establishment of the judicial tribunals under the authority of the State, in 1776, he received an offer of the high and responsible station of Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. But he was destined for another and a different career. From early life the bent of his mind was toward politics; a propensity, which the state of the times, if it did not create, doubtless very much strengthened. Public subjects must have occupied the thoughts and filled up the conversation in the circles in which he then moved; and the interesting questions, at that time just arising, could not but seize on a mind, like his, ardent, sanguine and patriotic. The letter, fortunately preserved, written by him at Worcester so early as the 12th of October, 1755, is a proof of very comprehensive views, and uncommon depth of reflection, in a young man not yet quite twenty. In this letter he predicted the transfer of power, and the establishment of a new seat of empire in America; he predicted, also, the increase of population in the colonies; and anticipated their naval distinction, and foretold that all Europe, combined, could not subdue them. All this is said, not on a public occasion, or for effect, but in the style of sober and friendly correspondence, as the result of his own thoughts. 'I sometimes retire,' said he, at the close of the letter, 'and laying things together form some reflections pleasing to myself. The produce of one of these reveries you have read above.' This prognostication, so early in his own life, so early in the history of the country, of independence, of vast increase of numbers, of naval force, of such augmented power as might defy all Europe, is remarkable. It is more remarkable, that its author should live to see fulfilled to the letter, what could have seemed to others, at the time, but the extravagance of youthful fancy. His earliest political

feelings' were thus strongly American; and from this ardent attachment to his native soil he never departed.

While still living at Quincy, and at the age of twenty-four, Mr. Adams was present, in this town, on the argument before the Supreme Court respecting Writs of Assistance, and heard the celebrated and patriotic speech of James Otis. Unquestionably, that was a masterly performance. No flighty declamation about liberty, no superficial discussion of popular topics, it was a learned, penetrating, convincing, constitutional argument, expressed in a strain of high and resolute patriotism. He grasped the question, then pending between England and her Colonies, with the strength of a lion; and if he sometimes sported, it was only because the lion himself is sometimes playful. Its success appears to have been as great as its merits, and its impression was widely felt. Mr. Adams himself seems never to have lost the feeling it produced, and to have entertained constantly the fullest conviction of its important effects. 'I do say,' he observes, 'in the most solemn manner, that Mr. Otis' Oration against Writs of Assistance, breathed into this nation the breath of life.'

In 1765 Mr. Adams laid before the public what I suppose to be his first printed performance, except essays for the periodical press, a Dissertation on the Canon and Feudal Law. The object of this work was to show that our New England ancestors, in consenting to exile themselves from their native land, were actuated, mainly, by the desire of delivering themselves from the power of the hierarchy, and from the monarchical and aristocratical political systems of the other continent; and to make this truth bear, with effect, on the politics of the times. Its tone is uncommonly bold and animated, for that period. He calls on the people, not only to defend, but to study and understand their rights and privileges; urges earnestly the necessity of diffusing general knowledge, invokes the clergy and the bar, the colleges and academies, and all others who have the ability and the means, to

expose the insidious designs of arbitrary power, to resist its approaches, and to be persuaded that there is a settled design on foot to enslave all America. 'Be it remembered,' says the author, 'that liberty must, at all hazards, be supported. We have a right to it, derived from our Maker. But if we had not, our fathers have earned it, and bought it for us, at the expense of their ease, their estate, their pleasure and their blood. And liberty cannot be preserved without a general knowledge among the people, who have a right, from the frame of their nature, to knowledge, as their great Creator, who does nothing in vain, has given them understandings, and a desire to know; but besides this, they have a right, an indisputable, unalienable, indefeasible right to that most dreaded and envied kind of knowledge, I mean of the character and conduct of their rulers. Rulers are no more than attorneys, agents, and trustees of the people; and if the cause, the interest and trust, is insidiously betrayed, or wantonly trifled away, the people have a right to revoke the authority, that they themselves have deputed, and to constitute other and better agents, attorneys and trustees.'

The citizens of this town conferred on Mr. Adams his first political distinction, and clothed him with his first political trust, by electing him one of their representatives, in 1770. Before this time he had become extensively known throughout the province, as well by the part he had acted in relation to public affairs, as by the exercise of his professional ability. He was among those who took the deepest interest in the controversy with England, and whether in or out of the Legislature, his time and talents were alike devoted to the cause. In the years 1773 and 1774 he was chosen a counsellor, by the members of the General Court, but rejected by Governor Hutchinson, in the former of those years, and by Governor Gage in the latter.

The time was now at hand, however, when the affairs of the colonies urgently demanded united coun-

cils. An open rupture with the parent State appeared inevitable, and it was but the dictate of prudence, that those who were united by a common interest and a common danger, should protect that interest and guard against that danger, by united efforts. A General Congress of Delegates from all the colonies, having been proposed and agreed to, the House of Representatives, on the 17th of June, 1774, elected James Bowdoin; Thomas Cushing, Samuel Adams, John Adams, and Robert Treat Paine, delegates from Massachusetts. This appointment was made at Salem, where the General Court had been convened by Governor Gage, in the last hour of the existence of a House of Representatives under the provincial Charter. While engaged in this important business, the Governor having been informed of what was passing, sent his secretary with a message dissolving the General Court. The secretary finding the door locked, directed the messenger to go in and inform the speaker that the secretary was at the door with a message from the Governor. The messenger returned, and informed the secretary that the orders of the House were that the doors should be kept fast; whereupon the secretary soon after read a proclamation, dissolving the General Court upon the stairs. Thus terminated, forever, the actual exercise of the political power of England in or over Massachusetts. The four last named delegates accepted their appointments, and took their seats in Congress, the first day of its meeting, September 5, 1774, in Philadelphia.

The proceedings of the first Congress are well known, and have been universally admired. It is in vain that we would look for superior proofs of wisdom, talent and patriotism. Lord Chatham said, that for himself, he must declare, that he had studied and admired the free states of antiquity, the master states of the world, but that for solidity of reasoning, force of sagacity, and wisdom of conclusion, no body of men could stand in preference to this Congress. It is hardly inferior praise to say, that no production of that

great man himself can be pronounced superior to several of the papers published as the proceedings of this most able, most firm, most patriotic assembly. There is indeed, nothing superior to them in the range of political disquisition. They not only embrace, illustrate, and enforce every thing which political philosophy, the love of liberty, and the spirit of free inquiry had antecedently produced, but they add new and striking views of their own, and apply the whole, with irresistible force, in support of the cause which had drawn them together.

Mr. Adams was a constant attendant on the deliberations of this body, and bore an active part in its important measures. He was of the committee to state the rights of the colonies, and of that also which reported the address to the king.

As it was in the Continental Congress, fellow-citizens, that those whose deaths have given rise to this occasion, were first brought together, and called on to unite their industry and their ability, in the service of the country, let us now turn to the other of these distinguished men, and take a brief notice of his life, up to the period when he appeared within the walls of Congress.

Thomas Jefferson, descended from ancestors who had been settled in Virginia for some generations, was born near the spot on which he died, in the county of Albemarle, on the 2d of April, (Old Style,) 1743. His youthful studies were pursued in the neighborhood of his father's residence, until he was removed to the college of William and Mary, the highest honors of which he in due time received. Having left the college with reputation, he applied himself to the study of the law, under the tuition of George Wythe, one of the highest judicial names of which that State can boast. At an early age he was elected a member of the Legislature, in which he had no sooner appeared than he distinguished himself, by knowledge, capacity, and promptitude.

Mr. Jefferson appears to have been imbued with an

early love of letters and science, and to have cherished a strong disposition to pursue these objects. To the physical sciences, especially, and to ancient classic literature, he is understood to have had a warm attachment, and never entirely to have lost sight of them, in the midst of the busiest occupations. But the times were times for action, rather than for contemplation. The country was to be defended, and to be saved, before it could be enjoyed. Philosophic leisure and literary pursuits, and even the objects of professional attention, were all necessarily postponed to the urgent calls of the public service. The exigency of the country made the same demand on Mr. Jefferson that it made on others who had the ability and the disposition to serve it; and he obeyed the call; thinking and feeling, in this respect, with the great Roman orator; *Quis enim est tam cupidus in perspicienda cognoscendaque rerum natura, ut, si ei tractanti contemplantique res cognitione dignissimas subito sit allatum periculum discrimenque patriæ, cui subvenire opitulatique possit, non illa omnia relinquat atque abjiciat, etiam si dinumerare se stellas, aut metiri mundi magnitudinem posse arbitretur?*

Entering, with all his heart, into the cause of liberty, his ability, patriotism, and power with the pen naturally drew upon him a large participation in the most important concerns. Wherever he was, there was found a soul devoted to the cause, power to defend and maintain it, and willingness to incur all its hazards. In 1774 he published a *Summary View of the Rights of British America*, a valuable production among those intended to show the dangers which threatened the liberties of the country, and to encourage the people in their defence. In June 1775 he was elected a member of the Continental Congress, as successor to Peyton Randolph, who had retired on account of ill health, and took his seat in that body on the 21st of the same month.

And now, fellow-citizens, without pursuing the biography of these illustrious men further, for the present,

let us turn our attention to the most prominent act of their lives, their participation in the Declaration of Independence.

Preparatory to the introduction of that important measure, a committee, at the head of which was Mr. Adams, had reported a resolution, which Congress adopted the 10th of May, recommending, in substance, to all the colonies which had not already established governments suited to the exigencies of their affairs, to adopt such government, as would, in the opinion of the representatives of the people, best conduce to the happiness and safety of their constituents in particular, and America in general.

This significant vote was soon followed by the direct proposition, which Richard Henry Lee had the honor to submit to Congress, by resolution, on the 7th day of June. The published journal does not expressly state it, but there is no doubt, I suppose, that this resolution was in the same words, when originally submitted by Mr. Lee, as when finally passed. Having been discussed, on Saturday the 8th, and Monday the 10th of June, this resolution was on the last mentioned day postponed, for further consideration, to the first day of July; and, at the same time it was voted, that a committee be appointed to prepare a Declaration, to the effect of the resolution. This committee was elected by ballot, on the following day, and consisted of Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Roger Sherman, and Robert R. Livingston.

It is usual, when committees are elected by ballot, that their members are arranged, in order, according to the number of votes which each has received, Mr. Jefferson, therefore, had received the highest, and Mr. Adams the next highest number of votes. The difference is said to have been but of a single vote. Mr. Jefferson and Mr. Adams, standing thus at the head of the committee, were requested by the other members, to act as a sub-committee, to prepare the draft; and Mr. Jefferson drew up the paper. The original draft, as brought by him from his study, and

submitted to the other members of the committee, with interlineations in the hand-writing of Dr. Franklin, and others in that of Mr. Adams, was in Mr. Jefferson's possession at the time of his death. The merit of this paper is Mr. Jefferson's. Some changes were made in it, on the suggestion of other members of the committee, and others by Congress while it was under discussion. But none of them altered the tone, the frame, the arrangement, or the general character of the instrument. As a composition, the declaration is Mr. Jefferson's. It is the production of his mind, and the high honor of it belongs to him, clearly and absolutely.

It has sometimes been said, as if it were a derogation from the merits of this paper, that it contains nothing new; that it only states grounds of proceeding, and presses topics of argument, which had often been stated and pressed before. But it was not the object of the declaration to produce any thing new. It was not to invent reasons for independence, but to state those which governed the Congress. For great and sufficient causes, it was proposed to declare independence; and the proper business of the paper to be drawn, was to set forth those causes, and justify the authors of the measure, in any event of fortune, to the country, and to posterity. The cause of American independence, moreover, was now to be presented to the world, in such manner, if it might so be, as to engage its sympathy, to command its respect, to attract its admiration; and in an assembly of most able and distinguished men, Thomas Jefferson had the high honor of being the selected advocate of this cause. To say that he performed his great work well, would be doing him injustice. To say that he did excellently well, admirably well, would be inadequate and halting praise. Let us rather say, that he so discharged the duty assigned him, that all Americans may well rejoice that the work of drawing the title deed of their liberties devolved on his hands.

With all its merits, there are those who have thought

that there was one thing in the declaration to be regretted; and that is, the asperity and apparent anger with which it speaks of the person of the king; the industrious ability with which it accumulates and charges upon him, all the injuries which the colonies had suffered from the mother country. Possibly some degree of injustice, now or hereafter, at home or abroad, may be done to the character of Mr. Jefferson, if this part of the declaration be not placed in its proper light. Anger or resentment, certainly, much less personal reproach and invective, could not properly find place, in a composition of such high dignity, and of such lofty and permanent character.

A single reflection on the original ground of dispute, between England and the colonies, is sufficient to remove any unfavorable impression, in this respect.

The inhabitants of all the colonies, while colonies, admitted themselves bound by their allegiance to the king; but they disclaimed, altogether, the authority of parliament; holding themselves, in this respect, to resemble the condition of Scotland and Ireland, before the respective unions of those kingdoms with England, when they acknowledged allegiance to the same king, but each had its separate legislature. The tie, therefore, which our revolution was to break, did not subsist between us and the British parliament, or between us and the British government, in the aggregate; but directly between us and the king himself. The colonies had never admitted themselves subject to parliament. That was precisely the point of the original controversy. They had uniformly denied that parliament had authority to make laws for them. There was, therefore, no subjection to parliament to be thrown off.* But allegiance to the king did exist, and had

* This question, of the power of parliament over the colonies, was discussed with singular ability, by Gov. Hutchinson on the one side, and the house of representatives of Massachusetts on the other, in 1773. The argument of the House is in the form of an answer to the governor's message, and was reported by Mr. Samuel Adams, Mr. Hancock, Mr. Hawley, Mr. Bowers, Mr. Hobson, Mr. Foster,

been uniformly acknowledged; and down to 1775 the most solemn assurances had been given that it was not intended to break that allegiance, or to throw it off. Therefore, as the direct object, and only effect of the declaration, according to the principles on which the controversy had been maintained, on our part, was to sever the tie of allegiance which bound us to the king, it was properly and necessarily founded on acts of the crown itself, as its justifying causes. Parliament is not so much as mentioned, in the whole instrument. When odious and oppressive acts are referred to, it is done by charging the king with confederating, with others, 'in pretended acts of legislation;' the object being, constantly, to hold the king himself directly responsible for those measures which were the grounds of separation. Even the precedent of the English revolution was not overlooked, and in this case, as well as in that, occasion was found to say that the king had abdicated the government. Consistency with the principles upon which resistance began, and with all the previous state papers issued by Congress, required that the declaration should be bottomed on the misgovernment of the king; and therefore it was properly framed with that aim and to that end. The king was known, indeed, to have acted, as in other cases, by his ministers, and with his parliament; but as our ancestors had never admitted themselves subject either to ministers or to parliament, there were no reasons to be given for now refusing obedience to their authority. This clear and obvious necessity of founding the declaration on the misconduct of the king himself, gives to that instrument its personal application, and its character of direct and pointed accusation.

The declaration having been reported to Congress,

Mr. Phillips and Mr. Thayer. As the power of the parliament had been acknowledged, so far at least as to effect us by laws of trade, it was not easy to settle the line of distinction. It was thought however to be very clear, that the charters of the colonies had exempted them from the general legislation of the British parliament. See *Massachusetts State Papers*, p. 351.

by the committee, the resolution itself was taken up and debated on the first day of July, and again on the second, on which last day it was agreed to and adopted, in these words,

Resolved, That these united colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent states; that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British crown, and that all political connexion between them, and the state of Great Britain is, and ought to be; totally dissolved.

Having thus passed the main resolution, Congress proceeded to consider the reported draft of the declaration. It was discussed on the second, and third, and fourth days of the month, in committee of the whole; and on the last of those days, being reported from that committee, it received the final approbation and sanction of Congress. It was ordered, at the same time, that copies be sent to the several States, and that it be proclaimed at the head of the army. The declaration thus published, did not bear the names of the members, for as yet it had not been signed by them. It was authenticated, like other papers of the Congress, by the signatures of the President and Secretary. On the 19th of July, as appears by the secret journal, Congress 'Resolved, that the declaration, passed on the fourth, be fairly engrossed on parchment, with the title and style of "The unanimous declaration of the Thirteen United States of America;" and that the same, when engrossed, be signed by every member of Congress.' And on the second day of August, following, 'the declaration, being engrossed and compared at the table, was signed by the members.' So that it happens, fellow-citizens, that we pay these honors to their memory, on the anniversary of that day, on which these great men actually signed their names to the declaration. The declaration was thus made, that is, it passed, and was adopted, as an act of Congress, on the fourth of July; it was then signed and certified by the president and secretary, like other acts. The fourth of July, therefore, is the anniversary of the

declaration. But the signatures of the members present were made to it, being then engrossed on parchment, on the second day of August. Absent members afterwards signed, as they came in; and indeed it bears the names of some who were not chosen members of Congress, until after the fourth of July. The interest belonging to the subject, will be sufficient, I hope, to justify these details.

The Congress of the Revolution, fellow-citizens, sat with closed doors, and no report of its debates was ever taken. The discussion, therefore, which accompanied this great measure, has never been preserved, except in memory, and by tradition. But it is, I believe, doing no injustice to others, to say, that the general opinion was, and uniformly has been, that in debate, on the side of independence, John Adams had no equal. The great author of the declaration himself has expressed that opinion uniformly and strongly. 'John Adams,' said he, in the hearing of him who has now the honor to address you, 'John Adams was our Colossus on the floor. Not graceful, not eloquent, not always fluent, in his public addresses, he yet came out with a power, both of thought and of expression, which moved us from our seats.'

For the part which he was here to perform, Mr. Adams doubtless was eminently fitted. He possessed a bold spirit, which disregarded danger, and a sanguine reliance on the goodness of the cause, and the virtues of the people, which led him to overlook all obstacles. His character, too, had been formed in troubled times. He had been rocked in the early storms of the controversy, and had acquired a decision and a hardihood, proportioned to the severity of the discipline which he had undergone.

He not only loved the American cause devoutly, but had studied and understood it. It was all familiar to him. He had tried his powers, on the questions which it involved, often, and in various ways; and had brought to their consideration whatever of argument or illustration the history of his own country, the history of

England, or the stores of ancient or of legal learning could furnish. Every grievance, enumerated in the long catalogue of the declaration, had been the subject of his discussion, and the object of his remonstrance and reprobation. From 1760, the colonies, the rights of the colonies, the liberties of the colonies, and the wrongs inflicted on the colonies, had engaged his constant attention; and it has surprised those, who have had the opportunity of observing, with what full remembrance, and with what prompt recollection, he could refer, in his extreme old age, to every act of Parliament affecting the colonies, distinguishing and stating their respective titles, sections and provisions; and to all the colonial memorials, remonstrances, and petitions, with whatever else belonged to the intimate and exact history of the times from that year to 1775. It was in his own judgment, between these years, that the American people came to a full understanding and thorough knowledge of their rights, and to a fixed resolution of maintaining them; and bearing himself an active part in all important transactions, the controversy with England being then, in effect, the business of his life, facts, dates and particulars made an impression which was never effaced. He was prepared, therefore, by education and discipline, as well as by natural talent and natural temperament, for the part which he was now to act.

The eloquence of Mr. Adams resembled his general character, and formed, indeed, a part of it. It was bold, manly, and energetic; and such the crisis required. When public bodies are to be addressed on momentous occasions, when great interests are at stake, and strong passions excited, nothing is valuable, in speech, farther than it is connected with high intellectual and moral endowments. Clearness, force, and earnestness are the qualities which produce conviction. True eloquence, indeed, does not consist in speech. It cannot be brought from far. Labor and learning may toil for it, but they will toil in vain. Words and phrases may be marshalled in every way,

but they cannot compass it. It must exist in the man, in the subject, and in the occasion. Affected passion, intense expression, the pomp of declamation, all may aspire after it—they cannot reach it. It comes, if it come at all, like the outbreking of a fountain from the earth, or the bursting forth of volcanic fires, with spontaneous, original, native force. The graces taught in the schools, the costly ornaments, and studied contrivances of speech, shock and disgust men, when their own lives, and the fate of their wives, their children, and their country, hang on the decision of the hour. Then words have lost their power, rhetoric is vain, and all elaborate oratory contemptible. Even genius itself then feels rebuked, and subdued, as in the presence of higher qualities. Then, patriotism is eloquent; then, self-devotion is eloquent. The clear conception, outrunning the deductions of logic, the high purpose, the firm resolve, the dauntless spirit, speaking on the tongue, beaming from the eye, informing every feature, and urging the whole man onward, right onward to his object—this, this is eloquence; or rather it is something greater and higher than all eloquence, it is action, noble, sublime, godlike action.

In July, 1776, the controversy had passed the stage of argument. An appeal had been made to force, and opposing armies were in the field. Congress, then, was to decide whether the tie which had so long bound us to the parent State, was to be severed at once, and severed forever. All the colonies had signified their resolution to abide by this decision, and the people looked for it with the most intense anxiety. And surely, fellow-citizens, never, never were men called to a more important political deliberation. If we contemplate it from the point where they then stood, no question could be more full of interest; if we look at it now, and judge of its importance by its effects, it appears in still greater magnitude.

Let us, then, bring before us the assembly, which was about to decide a question thus big with the fate

of empire. Let us open their doors, and look in upon their deliberations. Let us survey the anxious and care-worn countenances, let us hear the firm-toned voices, of this band of patriots.

Hancock presides over the solemn sitting; and one of those not yet prepared to pronounce for absolute independence, is on the floor, and is urging his reasons for dissenting from the declaration.

‘Let us pause! This step, once taken, cannot be retraced. This resolution, once passed, will cut off all hope of reconciliation. If success attend the arms of England, we shall then be no longer colonies, with charters, and with privileges; these will all be forfeited by this act; and we shall be in the condition of other conquered people, at the mercy of the conquerors. For ourselves, we may be ready to run the hazard; but are we ready to carry the country to that length? Is success so probable as to justify it? Where is the military, where the naval power, by which we are to resist the whole strength of the arm of England, for she will exert that strength to the utmost? Can we rely on the constancy and perseverance of the people? or will they not act, as the people of other countries have acted, and wearied with a long war, submit, in the end, to a worse oppression? While we stand on our old ground, and insist on redress of grievances, we know we are right, and are not answerable for consequences. Nothing, then, can be imputable to us. But if we now change our object, carry our pretensions further, and set up for absolute independence, we shall lose the sympathy of mankind. We shall no longer be defending what we possess, but struggling for something which we never did possess, and which we have solemnly and uniformly disclaimed all intention of pursuing, from the very outset of the troubles. Abandoning thus our old ground, of resistance only to arbitrary acts of oppression, the nations will believe the whole to have been mere pretence, and they will look on us, not as injured, but as ambitious, subjects. I shudder, before this responsibility. It will be on us,

if relinquishing the ground we have stood on so long, and stood on so safely, we now proclaim independence, and carry on the war for that object, while these cities burn, these pleasant fields whiten and bleach with the bones of their owners, and these streams run blood. It will be upon us, it will be upon us, if failing to maintain this unseasonable and ill-judged declaration, a sterner despotism, maintained by military power, shall be established over our posterity, when we ourselves, given up by an exhausted, a harassed, a misled people, shall have expiated our rashness and atoned for our presumption, on the scaffold.'

It was for Mr. Adams to reply to arguments like these. We know his opinions, and we know his character. He would commence with his accustomed directness and earnestness.

'Sink or swim, live or die, survive or perish, I give my hand, and my heart, to this vote. It is true, indeed, that in the beginning, we aimed not at independence. But there's a Divinity which shapes our ends. The injustice of England has driven us to arms; and, blinded to her own interest for our good, she has obstinately persisted, till independence is now within our grasp. We have but to reach forth to it, and it is ours. Why then should we defer the declaration? Is any man so weak as now to hope for a reconciliation with England, which shall leave either safety to the country and its liberties, or safety to his own life, and his own honor? Are not you, sir, who sit in that chair, is not he, our venerable colleague near you, are you not both already the proscribed and predestined objects of punishment and of vengeance? Cut off from all hope of royal clemency, what are you, what can you be, while the power of England remains, but outlaws? If we postpone independence, do we mean to carry on, or to give up, the war? Do we mean to submit to the measures of parliament, Boston port-bill and all? Do we mean to submit, and consent that we ourselves shall be ground to powder, and our country and its rights trodden down in the dust? I know we

do not mean to submit. We never shall submit. Do we intend to violate that most solemn obligation ever entered into by men, that plighting, before God, of our sacred honor to Washington, when putting him forth to incur the dangers of war, as well as the political hazards of the times, we promised to adhere to him, in every extremity, with our fortunes and our lives? I know there is not a man here, who would not rather see a general conflagration sweep over the land, or an earthquake sink it, than one jot or tittle of that plighted faith fall to the ground. For myself, having, twelve months ago, in this place, moved you, that George Washington be appointed commander of the forces, raised or to be raised, for defence of American liberty, may my right hand forget her cunning, and my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I hesitate or waver, in the support I give him. The war, then, must go on. We must fight it through. And if the war must go on, why put off longer the Declaration of Independence? That measure will strengthen us. It will give us character abroad. The nations will then treat with us, which they never can do while we acknowledge ourselves subjects, in arms against our sovereign. Nay I maintain that England, herself, will sooner treat for peace with us on the footing of Independence, than consent, by repealing her acts, to acknowledge that her whole conduct towards us has been a course of injustice and oppression. Her pride will be less wounded, by submitting to that course of things which now predestinates our independence, than by yielding the points in controversy to her rebellious subjects. The former she would regard as the result of fortune; the latter she would feel as her own deep disgrace. Why then, why then, sir, do we not as soon as possible, change this from a civil to a national war? And since we must fight it through, why not put ourselves in a state to enjoy all the benefits of victory, if we gain the victory?

If we fail, it can be no worse for us. But we shall not fail. The cause will raise up armies; the cause

will create navies. The people, the people, if we are true to them, will carry us, and will carry themselves, gloriously, through this struggle. I care not how fickle other people have been found. I know the people of these colonies, and I know that resistance to British aggression is deep and settled in their hearts and cannot be eradicated. Every colony, indeed, has expressed its willingness to follow, if we but take the lead. Sir, the declaration will inspire the people with increased courage. Instead of a long and bloody war for restoration of privileges, for redress of grievances, for chartered immunities, held under a British king, set before them the glorious object of entire independence, and it will breathe into them anew the breath of life. Read this declaration at the head of the army; every sword will be drawn from its scabbard, and the solemn vow uttered, to maintain it, or to perish on the bed of honor. Publish it from the pulpit; religion will approve it, and the love of religious liberty will cling round it, resolved to stand with it, or fall with it. Send it to the public halls; proclaim it there; let them hear it, who heard the first roar of the enemy's cannon; let them see it, who saw their brothers and their sons fall on the field of Bunker Hill, and in the streets of Lexington and Concord, and the very walls will cry out in its support.

Sir, I know the uncertainty of human affairs, but I see, I see clearly, through this day's business. You and I, indeed, may rue it. We may not live to the time, when this declaration shall be made good. We may die; die, colonists; die, slaves; die, it may be, ignominiously and on the scaffold. Be it so. Be it so. If it be the pleasure of Heaven that my country shall require the poor offering of my life, the victim shall be ready, at the appointed hour of sacrifice, come when that hour may. But while I do live, let me have a country, or at least the hope of a country, and that a free country.

But whatever may be our fate, be assured, be assured, that this declaration will stand. It may cost treasure,

and it may cost blood; but it will stand, and it will richly compensate for both. Through the thick gloom of the present, I see the brightness of the future, as the sun in Heaven. We shall make this a glorious, an immortal day. When we are in our graves, our children will honor it. They will celebrate it, with thanksgiving, with festivity, with bonfires and illuminations. On its annual return they will shed tears, copious, gushing tears, not of subjection and slavery, not of agony and distress, but of exultation, of gratitude, and of joy. Sir, before God, I believe the hour has come. My judgment approves this measure, and my whole heart is in it. All that I have, and all that I am, and all that I hope, in this life, I am now ready here to stake upon it; and I leave off, as I begun, that live or die, survive or perish, I am for the declaration. It is my living sentiment, and by the blessing of God it shall be my dying sentiment; independence, now; and independence forever.'

And so that day shall be honored, illustrious prophet and patriot! so that day shall be honored, and as often as it returns, thy renown shall come along with it, and the glory of thy life, like the day of thy death, shall not fail from the remembrance of men.

It would be unjust, fellow-citizens, on this occasion, while we express our veneration for him who is the immediate subject of these remarks, were we to omit a most respectful, affectionate, and grateful mention of those other great men, his colleagues, who stood with him, and with the same spirit, the same devotion, took part in the interesting transaction. Hancock, the proscribed Hancock, exiled from his home by a military governor, cut off, by proclamation, from the mercy of the crown, heaven reserved, for him, the distinguished honor of putting this great question to the vote, and of writing his own name first, and most conspicuously, on that parchment which spoke defiance to the power of the crown of England. There, too, is the name of that other proscribed patriot, Samuel Adams; a man who hungered and thirsted for the independence of his

country; who thought the declaration halted and lingered, being himself not only ready, but eager, for it, long before it was proposed; a man of the deepest sagacity, the clearest foresight, and the profoundest judgment in men. And there is Gerry, himself among the earliest and the foremost of the patriots, found, when the battle of Lexington summoned them to common councils, by the side of Warren; a man who lived to serve his country at home and abroad, and to die in the second place in the government. There, too, is the inflexible, the upright, the Spartan character, Robert Treat Paine. He, also, lived to serve his country through the struggle, and then withdrew from her councils, only that he might give his labors and his life to his native State, in another relation. These names, fellow-citizens, are the treasures of the commonwealth; and they are treasures which grow brighter by time.

It is now necessary to resume, and to finish with great brevity, the notice of the lives of those, whose virtues and services we have met to commemorate.

Mr. Adams remained in Congress from its first meeting, till November, 1777, when he was appointed minister to France. He proceeded on that service, in the February following, embarking in the Boston frigate, on the shore of his native town, at the foot of Mount Wollaston. The year following, he was appointed commissioner to treat of peace with England. Returning to the United States, he was a delegate from Braintree in the convention for framing the constitution of this Commonwealth, in 1780. At the latter end of the same year, he again went abroad, in the diplomatic service of the country, and was employed at various courts, and occupied with various negotiations, until 1788. The particulars of these interesting and important services this occasion does not allow time to relate. In 1782, he concluded our first treaty with Holland. His negotiations with that republic, his efforts to persuade the States-General to recognize our independence, his incessant and indefatigable ex-

ertions to represent the American cause favorably, on the Continent, and to counteract the designs of its enemies, open and secret; and his successful undertaking to obtain loans, on the credit of a nation yet new and unknown, are among his most arduous, most useful, most honorable services. It was his fortune, to bear a part in the negociation for peace with England, and in something more than six years from the declaration which he had so strenuously supported, he had the satisfaction to see the minister plenipotentiary of the crown subscribe to the instrument which declared, that his 'Britanic Majesty acknowledged the United States to be free, sovereign and independent.' In these important transactions, Mr. Adams' conduct received the marked approbation of Congress, and of the country.

While abroad, in 1787, he published his *Defence of the American Constitutions*; a work of merit, and ability, though composed with haste, on the spur of a particular occasion, in the midst of other occupations, and under circumstances not admitting of careful revision. The immediate object of the work was to counteract the weight of opinions advanced by several popular European writers of that day, M. Turgot, the Abbe de Mably, and Dr. Price; at a time when the people of the United States were employed in forming and revising their systems of government.

Returning to the United States in 1788, he found the new government about going into operation, and was himself elected the first Vice-President, a situation which he filled with reputation for eight years, at the expiration of which he was raised to the Presidential chair, as immediate successor to the immortal Washington. In this high station he was succeeded by Mr. Jefferson, after a memorable controversy, between their respective friends, in 1801; and from that period his manner of life has been known to all who hear me. He has lived, for five and twenty years, with every enjoyment that could render old age happy. Not inattentive to the occurrences of the times, politi-

cal cares have yet not materially, or for any long time, disturbed his repose. In 1820 he acted as elector of President and Vice-President, and in the same year we saw him, then at the age of eighty-five, a member of the convention of this Commonwealth, called to revise the Constitution. Forty years before, he had been one of those who formed that Constitution; and he had now the pleasure of witnessing that there was little which the people desired to change. Possessing all his faculties to the end of his long life, with an unabated love of reading and contemplation, in the centre of interesting circles of friendship and affection, he was blessed, in his retirement, with whatever of repose and felicity, the condition of man allows. He had, also, other enjoyments. He saw around him that prosperity and general happiness, which had been the object of his public cares and labors. No man ever beheld more clearly, and for a longer time, the great and beneficial effects of the services rendered by himself to his country. That liberty, which he so early defended, that independence of which he was so able an advocate and supporter, he saw, we trust, firmly and securely established. The population of the country thickened around him faster, and extended wider, than his own sanguine predictions had anticipated; and the wealth, respectability, and power of the nation sprang up to a magnitude, which it is quite impossible he could have expected to witness, in his day. He lived, also, to behold those principles of civil freedom, which had been developed, established, and practically applied in America, attract attention, command respect, and awaken imitation, in other regions of the globe: and well might, and well did he, exclaim, 'Where will the consequences of the American Revolution end!'

If any thing yet remain to fill this cup of happiness, let it be added, that he lived to see a great and intelligent people bestow the highest honor in their gift, where he had bestowed his own kindest parental affections, and lodged his fondest hopes. Thus honored

in life, thus happy at death, he saw the Jubilee, and he died; and with the last prayers which trembled on his lips, was the fervent supplication for his country, 'independence forever.'

Mr. Jefferson, having been occupied in the years 1778 and 1779, in the important service of revising the laws of Virginia, was elected Governor of that State, as successor to Patrick Henry, and held the situation when the State was invaded by the British arms. In 1781 he published his Notes on Virginia, a work which attracted attention in Europe as well as America, dispelled many misconceptions respecting this Continent, and gave its author a place among men distinguished for science. In November, 1783, he again took his seat in the Continental Congress, but in the May following was appointed Minister Plenipotentiary, to act abroad, in the negotiation of commercial treaties, with Dr. Franklin and Mr. Adams. He proceeded to France, in execution of this mission, embarking at Boston; and that was the only occasion on which he ever visited this place. In 1785 he was appointed minister to France, the duties of which situation he continued to perform, until October, 1789, when he obtained leave to retire, just on the eve of that tremendous Revolution which has so much agitated the world, in our times. Mr. Jefferson's discharge of his diplomatic duties was marked by great ability, diligence, and patriotism; and while he resided at Paris, in one of the most interesting periods, his character for intelligence, his love of knowledge, and of the society of learned men, distinguished him in the highest circles of the French capital. No court in Europe had, at that time, in Paris, a representative commanding or enjoying higher regard, for political knowledge or for general attainment, than the minister of this then infant republic. Immediately on his return to his native country, at the organization of the government under the present Constitution, his talents and experience recommended him to President Washington, for the first office in his gift. He was

placed at the head of the Department of State. In this situation, also, he manifested conspicuous ability. His correspondence with the ministers of other powers residing here, and his instructions to our own diplomatic agents abroad, are among our ablest State Papers. A thorough knowledge of the laws and usages of nations, perfect acquaintance with the immediate subject before him, great felicity, and still greater facility, in writing, show themselves in whatever effort his official situation called on him to make. It is believed, by competent judges, that the diplomatic intercourse of the government of the United States, from the first meeting of the Continental Congress in 1774 to the present time, taken together, would not suffer, in respect to the talent with which it has been conducted, by comparison with any thing which other and older States can produce; and to the attainment of this respectability and distinction, Mr. Jefferson has contributed his full part.

On the retirement of General Washington from the presidency, and the election of Mr. Adams to that office, in 1797, he was chosen Vice President. While presiding, in this capacity, over the deliberations of the senate, he compiled and published a *Manuel of Parliamentary Practice*, a work of more labor and more merit, than is indicated by its size. It is now received, as the general standard, by which proceedings are regulated, not only in both Houses of Congress, but in most of the other legislative bodies in the country. In 1801, he was elected President, in opposition to Mr. Adams, and re-elected in 1805, by a vote approaching towards unanimity.

From the time of his final retirement from public life, in 1807, Mr. Jefferson lived, as became a wise man. Surrounded by affectionate friends, his ardor in the pursuit of knowledge undiminished, with uncommon health, and unbroken spirits, he was able to enjoy largely the rational pleasures of life, and to partake in that public prosperity, which he had so much contributed to produce. His kindness and hospitality, the

charm of his conversation, the ease of his manners, the extent of his acquirements, and especially the full store of revolutionary incidents, which he possessed, and which he knew when and how to dispense, rendered his abode in a high degree attractive to his admiring countrymen, while his high public and scientific character drew towards him every intelligent and educated traveller from abroad. Both Mr. Adams and Mr. Jefferson had the pleasure of knowing that the respect, which they so largely received, was not paid to their official stations. They were not men made great by office; but great men, on whom the country for its own benefit had conferred office. There was that in them, which office did not give, and which the relinquishment of office did not, and could not, take away. In their retirement, in the midst of their fellow-citizens, themselves private citizens, they enjoyed as high regard and esteem, as when filling the most important places of public trust.

There remained to Mr. Jefferson yet one other work of patriotism and beneficence, the establishment of a university in his native state. To this object he devoted years of incessant and anxious attention, and by the enlightened liberality of the legislature of Virginia, and the co-operation of other able and zealous friends, he lived to see it accomplished. May all success attend this infant seminary; and may those who enjoy its advantages, as often as their eyes shall rest on the neighboring height, recollect what they owe to their disinterested and indefatigable benefactor; and may letters honor him who thus labored in the cause of letters.

Thus useful, and thus respected, passed the old age of Thomas Jefferson. But time was on its ever-ceaseless wing, and was now bringing the last hour of this illustrious man. He saw its approach, with undisturbed serenity. He counted the moments, as they passed, and beheld that his last sands were falling. That day, too, was at hand, which he had helped to make immortal. One wish, one hope—if it were not

presumptuous—beat in his fainting breast. Could it be so—might it please God—he would desire—once more—to see the sun—once more to look abroad on the scene around him, on the great day of liberty. Heaven, in its mercy, fulfilled that prayer. He saw that sun—he enjoyed its sacred light—he thanked God, for this mercy, and bowed his aged head to the grave. ‘*Felix, non vitæ tantum claritate, sed etiam opportunitate mortis.*’

The last public labor of Mr. Jefferson naturally suggests the expression of the high praise which is due, both to him and to Mr. Adams, for their uniform and zealous attachment to learning, and to the cause of general knowledge. Of the advantages of learning, indeed, and of literary accomplishments, their own characters were striking recommendations and illustrations. They were scholars, ripe and good scholars; widely acquainted with ancient, as well as modern literature, and not altogether uninstructed in the deeper sciences. Their acquirements, doubtless, were different, and so were the particular objects of their literary pursuits; as their tastes and characters, in these respects differed like those of other men. Being, also, men of busy lives, with great objects, requiring action, constantly before them, their attainments in letters did not become showy, or obtrusive. Yet, I would hazard the opinion, that if we could now ascertain all the causes which gave them eminence and distinction, in the midst of the great men with whom they acted, we should find, not among the least, their early acquisition in literature, the resources which it furnished, the promptitude and facility which it communicated, and the wide field it opened, for analogy and illustration; giving them, thus, on every subject, a larger view, and a broader range, as well for discussion, as for the government of their own conduct.

Literature sometimes, and pretensions to it much oftener, disgusts, by appearing to hang loosely on the character, like something foreign or extraneous, not a part, but an ill-adjusted appendage; or by seeming to

overload and weigh it down, by its unsightly bulk, like the productions of bad taste in architecture, where there is massy and cumbrous ornament, without strength or solidity of column. This has exposed learning, and especially classical learning, to reproach. Men have seen that it might exist, without mental superiority, without vigor, without good taste, and without utility. But, in such cases, classical learning has only not inspired natural talent; or, at most, it has but made original feebleness of intellect, and natural bluntness of perception, something more conspicuous. The question, after all, if it be a question, is, whether literature, ancient as well as modern, does not assist a good understanding, improve natural good taste, add polished armor to native strength, and render its possessor, not only more capable of deriving private happiness from contemplation and reflection, but more accomplished, also, for action, in the affairs of life, and especially for public action. Those whose memories we now honor, were learned men; but, their learning was kept in its proper place, and made subservient to the uses and objects of life. They were scholars not common, nor superficial; but their scholarship was so in keeping with their character, so blended and inwrought, that careless observers, or bad judges, not seeing an ostentatious display of it, might infer that it did not exist; forgetting, or not knowing, that classical learning, in men who act in conspicuous public stations, perform duties which exercise the faculty of writing, or address popular, deliberative, or judicial bodies, is often felt, where it is little seen, and sometimes felt more effectually, because it is not seen at all.

But the cause of knowledge, in a more enlarged sense, the cause of general knowledge and of popular education, had no warmer friends, nor more powerful advocates, than Mr. Adams and Mr. Jefferson. On this foundation, they knew, the whole republican system rested; and this great and all-important truth they strove to impress, by all the means in their power. In

the early publication, already referred to. Mr. Adams expresses the strong and just sentiment, that the education of the poor is more important, even to the rich themselves, than all their own riches. On this great truth, indeed, is founded that unrivalled, that invaluable political and moral institution, our own blessing, and the glory of our fathers, the New England system of free schools.

As the promotion of knowledge had been the object of their regard through life, so these great men made it the subject of their testamentary bounty. Mr. Jefferson is understood to have bequeathed his library to the university, and that of Mr. Adams is bestowed on the inhabitants of Quincy.

Mr. Adams, and Mr. Jefferson, fellow-citizens, were successively Presidents of the United States. The comparative merits of their respective administrations for a long time agitated and divided public opinion. They were rivals, each supported by numerous and powerful portions of the people, for the highest office. This contest, partly the cause, and partly the consequence, of the long existence of two great political parties in the country, is now part of the history of our government. We may naturally regret, that any thing should have occurred to create difference and discord, between those who had acted harmoniously and efficiently in the great concerns of the revolution. But this is not the time, nor this the occasion, for entering into the grounds of that difference, or for attempting to discuss the merits of the questions which it involves. As practical questions, they were canvassed, when the measures which they regarded were acted on and adopted: and as belonging to history, the time has not come for their consideration.

It is, perhaps, not wonderful, that when the Constitution of the United States went first into operation, different opinions should be entertained, as to the extent of the powers conferred by it. Here was a natural source of diversity of sentiment. It is still less wonderful, that that event, about contemporary with

our government, under the present Constitution, which so entirely shocked all Europe, and disturbed our relations with her leading powers, should be thought, by different men, to have different bearings on our own prosperity; and that the early measures, adopted by our government, in consequence of this new state of things, should be seen in opposite lights. It is for the future historian, when what now remains of prejudice and misconception shall have passed away, to state these different opinions, and pronounce impartial judgment. In the meantime, all good men rejoice, and well may rejoice, that the sharpest differences sprung out of measures, which, whether right or wrong, have ceased, with the exigencies that gave them birth, and have left no permanent effect, either on the Constitution, or on the general prosperity of the country. This remark, I am aware, may be supposed to have its exception, in one measure, the alteration of the Constitution, as to the mode of choosing President; but it is true, in its general application. Thus the course of policy pursued towards France, in 1798, on the one hand, and the measures of commercial restriction, commenced in 1807, on the other, both subjects of warm and severe opposition, have passed away, and left nothing behind them. They were temporary, and whether wise or unwise, their consequences were limited to their respective occasions. It is equally clear, at the same time, and it is equally gratifying, that those measures of both administrations, which were of durable importance, and which drew after them interesting and long remaining consequences, have received general approbation. Such was the organization, or rather the creation, of the navy, in the administration of Mr. Adams; such the acquisition of Louisiana, in that of Mr. Jefferson. The country, it may safely be added, is not likely to be willing either to approve, or to reprobate, indiscriminately, and in the aggregate, all the measures of either, or of any, administration. The dictate of reason and of justice is, that, holding each one his own sentiments on the points in differ-

ence, we imitate the great men themselves, in the forbearance and moderation which they have cherished, and in the mutual respect and kindness which they have been so much inclined to feel and to reciprocate.

No men, fellow-citizens, ever served their country with more entire exemption from every imputation of selfish and mercenary motive than those to whose memory we are paying these proofs of respect. A suspicion of any disposition to enrich themselves, or to profit by their public employments, never rested on either. No sordid motive approached them. The inheritance which they have left to their children, is of their character and their fame. Fellow-citizens, I will detain you no longer by this faint and feeble tribute to the memory of the illustrious dead. Even in other hands, adequate justice could not be performed, within the limits of this occasion. Their highest, their best praise, is your deep conviction of their merits, your affectionate gratitude for their labors and services. It is not my voice, it is this cessation of ordinary pursuits, this arresting of all attention, these solemn ceremonies, and this crowded house, which speak their eulogy. Their fame, indeed, is safe. That is now treasured up, beyond the reach of accident. Although no sculptured marble should rise to their memory, nor engraved stone bear record of their deeds, yet will their remembrance be as lasting as the land they honored. Marble columns may, indeed, moulder into dust, time may erase all impress from the crumbling stone, but their fame remains; for with AMERICAN LIBERTY it rose, and with AMERICAN LIBERTY ONLY can it perish. It was the last swelling peal of yonder choir, 'THEIR BODIES ARE BURIED IN PEACE, BUT THEIR NAME LIVETH EVERMORE.' I catch that solemn song, I echo that lofty strain of funeral triumph, 'THEIR NAME LIVETH EVERMORE.'

Of the illustrious signers of the Declaration of Independence there now remains only Charles Carroll. He seems an aged oak, standing alone on the plain, which time has spared a little longer, after all its contemporaries have been levelled with the dust. Vene-

rable object! we delight to gather round its trunk, while yet it stands, and to dwell beneath its shadow. Sole survivor of an assembly of as great men as the world has witnessed, in a transaction, one of the most important that history records, what thoughts, what interesting reflections must fill his elevated and devout soul! If he dwell on the past, how touching its recollections; if he survey the present, how happy, how joyous, how full of the fruition of that hope, which his ardent patriotism indulged; if he glance at the future, how does the prospect of his country's advancement almost bewilder his weakened conception! Fortunate, distinguished patriot! Interesting relic of the past! Let him know that while we honor the dead, we do not forget the living; and that there is not a heart here which does not fervently pray, that Heaven may keep him yet back from the society of his companions.

And now, fellow-citizens, let us not retire from this occasion, without a deep and solemn conviction of the duties which have devolved upon us. This lovely land, this glorious liberty, these benign institutions, the dear purchase of our fathers, are ours; ours to enjoy, ours to preserve, ours to transmit. Generations past, and generations to come, hold us responsible for this sacred trust. Our fathers, from behind, admonish us, with their anxious paternal voices, posterity calls out to us, from the bosom of the future, the world turns hither its solicitous eyes—all, all conjure us to act wisely, and faithfully, in the relation which we sustain. We can never, indeed, pay the debt which is upon us; but by virtue, by morality, by religion, by the cultivation of every good principle and every good habit, we may hope to enjoy the blessing, through our day, and to leave it unimpaired to our children. Let us feel deeply how much, of what we are and of what we possess, we owe to this liberty, and these institutions of government. Nature has, indeed, given us a soil, which yields bounteously to the hands of industry, the mighty and fruitful ocean is before us, and the

skies over our heads shed health and vigor. But what are lands, and seas, and skies, to civilized man, without society, without knowledge, without morals, without religious culture; and how can these be enjoyed, in all their extent, and all their excellence, but under the protection of wise institutions and a free government? Fellow-citizens, there is not one of us, there is not one of us here present, who does not, at this moment, and at every moment, experience, in his own condition, and in the condition of those most near and dear to him, the influence and the benefits of this liberty, and these institutions. Let us then acknowledge the blessing, let us feel it deeply and powerfully, let us cherish a strong affection for it, and resolve to maintain and perpetuate it. The blood of our fathers, let it not have been shed in vain; the great hope of posterity, let it not be blasted.

The striking attitude, too, in which we stand to the world around us, a topic to which, I fear, I advert too often, and dwell on too long, cannot be altogether omitted here. Neither individuals nor nations can perform their part well, until they understand and feel its importance, and comprehend and justly appreciate all the duties belonging to it. It is not to inflate national vanity, nor to swell a light and empty feeling of self-importance, but it is that we may judge justly of our situation, and of our own duties, that I earnestly urge this consideration of our position, and our character, among the nations of the earth. It cannot be denied, but by those who would dispute against the sun, that with America, and in America, a new era commences in human affairs. This era is distinguished by Free Representative Governments, by entire religious liberty, by improved systems of national intercourse, by a newly awakened, and an unconquerable spirit of free inquiry, and by a diffusion of knowledge through the community, such as has been before altogether unknown and unheard of. America, America, our country, fellow-citizens, our own dear and native land, is inseparably connected, fast bound up, in for-

tune and by fate, with these great interests. If they fall, we fall with them; if they stand, it will be because we have upholden them. Let us contemplate, then, this connexion, which binds the prosperity of others to our own; and let us manfully discharge all the duties which it imposes. If we cherish the virtues and the principles of our fathers, Heaven will assist us to carry on the work of human liberty and human happiness. Auspicious omens cheer us. Great examples are before us. Our own firmament now shines brightly upon our path. Washington is in the clear upper sky. Those other stars have now joined the American constellation; they circle round their centre, and the heavens beam with new light. Beneath this illumination, let us walk the course of life, and at its close devoutly commend our beloved country, the common parent of us all, to the Divine Benignity.

A DISCOURSE

PRONOUNCED AT CAMBRIDGE, BEFORE

THE PHI BETA KAPPA SOCIETY,

AT THE ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION, ON THE THIRTY-FIRST
DAY OF AUGUST, 1826,

BY JOSEPH STORY.

GENTLEMEN,

IF I had consulted my own wishes, I should not have presumed to address you on the present occasion. The habits of professional employment rarely admit of leisure for the indulgence of literary taste. And in a science, whose mastery demands a whole life of laborious diligence, whose details are inexhaustible, and whose intricacies task the most acute intellects, it would be matter of surprise, if every hour withdrawn from its concerns did not somewhat put at hazard the success of its votary. Nor can it escape observation, how much the technical doctrines of a jurisprudence, drawn from remote antiquity, and expanding itself over the business of many ages, must have a tendency to chill that enthusiasm, which lends encouragement to every enterprize, and to obscure those finer forms of thought, which give to literature its lovelier, I may say, its inexpressible graces. The consciousness of difficulties of this sort may well be supposed to press upon every professional mind. They can be overlooked by those only, whose youth has not been tried in the hard school of experience, or whose genius gives no credit to impossibilities.

I have not hesitated, however, to yield to your invitation, trusting to that indulgence, which has not hitherto been withheld from well meant efforts, and not un-

willing to add the testimony of my own example, however humble, in favor of the claims of this society to the services of all its members.

2 We live in an extraordinary age. It has been marked by events, which will leave a durable impression upon the pages of history by their own intrinsic importance. But they will be read with far deeper emotions in their effects upon future ages; in their consequences upon the happiness of whole communities; in the direct or silent changes forced by them into the very structure of society; in the establishment of a new and mighty empire, the empire of public opinion; in the operation of what Lord Bacon has characterized almost as supreme power, the power of knowledge, working its way to universality, and interposing checks upon government and people, by means gentle and decisive, which have never before been fully felt, and are even now, perhaps, incapable of being perfectly comprehended.

Other ages have been marked by brilliant feats in arms. Wars have been waged for the best and for the worst of purposes. The ambitious conqueror has trodden whole nations under his feet, to satisfy the lust of power; and the eagles of his victories have stood on either extreme of the civilized world. The barbarian has broken loose from his northern fastnesses, and overwhelmed in his progress temples and thrones, the adorers of the true God, and the worshippers of idols. Heroes and patriots have successfully resisted the invaders of their country, or perished in its defence; and in each way have given immortality to their exploits. Kingdoms have been rent asunder by intestine broils, or by struggles for freedom. Bigotry has traced out the march of its persecutions in footsteps of blood; and superstition employed its terrors to nerve the arm of the tyrant, or immolate his victims. There have been ancient leagues for the partition of empires, for the support of thrones, for the fencing out of human improvement, and for the consolidation of arbitrary power. There have, too, been

bright spots on the earth, where the cheering light of liberty shone in peace; where learning unlocked its stores in various profusion; where the arts unfolded themselves in every form of beauty and grandeur; where literature loved to linger in academic shades, or enjoy the public sunshine; where song lent new inspiration to the temple; where eloquence alternately consecrated the hall of legislation, or astonished the forum with its appeals.

We may not assert, that the present age can lay claim to the production of any one of the mightiest efforts of human genius. Homer and Virgil, and Shakspeare and Milton were of other days, and yet stand unrivalled in song. Time has not inscribed upon the sepulchre of the dead any nobler names in eloquence, than Demosthenes and Cicero. Who has outdone the chisel of Phidias, or the pencil of Michael Angelo, and Raffaele? Where are the monuments of our day, whose architecture dares to contend with the Doric, Ionic or Corinthian of Greece, or even with the Composite or Gothic of later times? History yet points to the pregnant though brief text of Tacitus, and acknowledges no finer models than those of antiquity. The stream of a century has swept by the works of Locke and Newton; yet they still stand alone in unapproached, in unapproachable majesty.

Nor may we pronounce, that the present age by its collective splendor in arts and arms casts into shade all former epochs. The era of Pericles witnessed a combination of talents and acquirements, of celebrated deeds and celebrated works, which the lapse of twenty-two centuries has left unobscured. Augustus, surveying his mighty empire, could scarcely contemplate with more satisfaction the triumph of his arms, than the triumph of the philosophy and literature of Rome. France yet delights to dwell on the times of Lewis the Fourteenth, as the proudest in her annals; and England, with far less propriety, looks back upon the reign of Queen Anne for the best models of her literary excellence.

But, though we may not arrogate to ourselves the possession of the first genius, or the first era in human history, let it not be imagined, that we do not live in an extraordinary age. It is impossible to look around us without alternate emotions of exultation and astonishment. What shall we say of one revolution, which created a nation out of thirteen feeble colonies, and founded the empire of liberty upon the basis of the perfect equality in rights and representation of all its citizens; which commenced in a struggle by enlightened men for principles, and not for places, and in its progress and conclusion exhibited examples of heroism, patriotic sacrifices, and disinterested virtue, which have never been surpassed in the most favored regions? What shall we say of this nation, which has in fifty years quadrupled its population, and spread itself from the Atlantic to the Rocky mountains, not by the desolations of successful war, but by the triumphant march of industry and enterprize? What shall we say of another revolution, which shook Europe to its centre, overturned principalities and thrones, demolished oppressions, whose iron had for ages entered into the souls of their subjects, and after various fortunes of victory and defeat, of military despotism and popular commotion, ended at last in the planting of free institutions, free tenures, and representative government in the very soil of absolute monarchy? What shall we say of another revolution, or rather series of revolutions, which has restored to South America the independence, torn from her three centuries ago by the force or by the fraud of those nations, whose present visitations bespeak a Providence, which superintends and measures out at awful distances its rewards and its retributions? She has risen, as it were, from the depths of the ocean, where she had been buried for ages. Her shores no longer murmur with the hoarse surges of her unnavigated waters, or echo the jealous footsteps of her armed oppressors. Her forests and her table lands, her mountains and her valleys gladden with the voices of the free. She welcomes to her ports the whitening

sails of commerce. She feels, that the treasures of her mines, the broad expanse of her rivers, the beauty of her lakes, the grandeur of her scenery, the products of her fertile and inexhaustible soil, are no longer the close domain of a distant sovereign, but the free inheritance of her own children. She sees, that these are to bind her to other nations by ties, which outlive all compacts, and all dynasties, by ties of mutual sympathy, mutual equality, and mutual interest.

But such events sink into nothing, compared with the great moral, political, and literary revolutions, by which they have been accompanied. Upon some of these topics, I may not indulge myself even for a moment. They have been discussed here, and in other places, in a manner, which forbids all hope of more comprehensive illustration. They may, indeed, be still followed out; but whoever dares the difficulties of such a task, will falter with unequal footsteps.

What I propose to myself on the present occasion is of a far more limited and humble nature. It is to trace out some of the circumstances of our age, which connect themselves closely with the cause of science and letters; to sketch here and there a light and shadow of our days;—to look somewhat at our own prospects and attainments;—and thus to lay before you something for reflection, for encouragement, and for admonition.

One of the most striking characteristics of our age, and that, indeed, which has worked deepest in all the changes of its fortunes and pursuits, is the general diffusion of knowledge. This is emphatically the age of reading. In other times this was the privilege of the few; in ours, it is the possession of the many. Learning once constituted the accomplishment of those in the higher orders of society, who had no relish for active employment, and of those, whose monastic lives and religious profession sought to escape from the weariness of their common duties. Its progress may be said to have been gradually downwards from the higher to the middle classes of society. It scarcely

reached at all, in its joys or its sorrows, in its instructions or its fantasies, the home of the peasant and artisan. It now radiates in all directions; and exerts its central force more in the middle, than in any other class of society. The means of education were formerly within the reach of few. It required wealth to accumulate knowledge. The possession of a library was no ordinary achievement. The learned leisure of a fellowship in some university seemed almost indispensable for any successful studies; and the patronage of princes and courtiers was the narrow avenue of public favor. I speak of a period at little more than the distance of two centuries; not of particular instances, but of the general cast and complexion of life.

The principal cause of this change is to be found in the freedom of the press, or rather in co-operating with the cheapness of the press. It has been aided also by the system of free schools, wherever it has been established; by that liberal commerce, which connects by golden chains the interests of mankind; by that spirit of inquiry, which protestantism awakened throughout Christian Europe; and above all by those necessities, which have compelled even absolute monarchs to appeal to the patriotism and common sentiments of their subjects. Little more than a century has elapsed since the press in England was under the control of a licenser; and within our own days only has it ceased to be a contempt, punishable by imprisonment, to print the debates of Parliament. We all know how it still is on the continent of Europe. It either speaks in timid under tones, or echoes back the prescribed formularies of the government. The moment publicity is given to affairs of state, they excite every where an irresistible interest. If discussion be permitted, it will soon be necessary to enlist talents to defend, as well as talents to devise measures. The daily press first instructed men in their wants, and soon found, that the eagerness of curiosity outstripped the power of gratifying it. No man can now doubt the fact, that wherever the press is free, it will emancipate the people;

wherever knowledge circulates unrestrained, it is no longer safe to oppress; wherever public opinion is enlightened, it nourishes an independent, masculine, and healthful spirit. If Faustus were now living, he might exclaim with all the enthusiasm of Archimedes, and with a far nearer approach to the truth, Give me where I may place a free press, and I will shake the world.

One interesting effect, which owes its origin to this universal love and power of reading, is felt in the altered condition of authors themselves. They no longer depend upon the smiles of a favored few. The patronage of the great is no longer submissively entreated, or exultingly proclaimed. Their patrons are the public; their readers are the civilized world. They address themselves, not to the present generation alone, but aspire to instruct posterity. No blushing dedications seek an easy passport to fame, or flatter the perilous condescension of pride. No illuminated letters flourish on the silky page, asking admission to the courtly drawingroom. Authors are no longer the humble companions or dependents of the nobility; but they constitute the chosen ornaments of society, and are welcomed to the gay circles of fashion and the palaces of princes. Theirs is no longer an unthrifty vocation, closely allied to penury; but an elevated profession, maintaining its thousands in lucrative pursuits. It is not with them, as it was in the days of Milton, whose immortal "Paradise Lost" drew five sterling pounds, with a contingent of five more, from the reluctant bookseller.

My Lord Coke would hardly find good authority in our day for his provoking commentary on the memorable statute of the fourth Henry, which declares that "none henceforth shall use to multiply gold or silver, or use the craft of multiplication," in which he gravely enumerates five classes of beggars, ending the catalogue in his own quaint phraseology with "poetasters," and repeating for the benefit of young apprentices of the law the sad admonition,

*"Sæpe pater dixit, Studium, quid inutile tentas ?
Mæonides nullas ipse reliquit opes."*

There are certainly among us those, who are within the penalty of this prohibition, if my Lord Coke's account of the matter is to be believed, for they are in possession of what he defines to be "a certain subtil and spiritual substance extracted out of things," whereby they transmute many things into gold. I am indeed afraid that the magician of Abbotsford is accustomed to "use the craft of multiplication;" and most of us know to our cost, that he has changed many strange substances into very gold and very silver. Yet even if he be an old offender in this way, as is shrewdly suspected, there is little danger of his conviction in this liberal age, since, though he gains by every thing he parts with, we are never willing to part with any thing we receive from him.

The rewards of authorship are almost as sure and regular now, as those of any other profession. There are, indeed, instances of wonderful success, and sad failure; of genius pining in neglect; of labor bringing nothing but sickness of the heart; of fruitless enterprise, baffled in every adventure; of learning waiting its appointed time to die in patient suffering. But this is the lot of some in all times. Disappointment crowds fast upon human footsteps in whatever paths they tread. Eminent good fortune is a prize rarely given even to the foremost in the race. And after all, he, who has read human life most closely, knows that happiness is not the constant attendant of the highest public favor; and that it rather belongs to those, who, if they seldom soar, seldom fall.

Scarcely is a work of real merit dry from the English press, before it wings its way to both the Indies and Americas. It is found in the most distant climates, and the most sequestered retreats. It charms the traveller as he sails over rivers and oceans. It visits our lakes and our forests. It kindles the curiosity of the thick-breathing city, and cheers the log hut

of the mountaineer. The Lake of the Woods resounds with the minstrelsy of our mother tongue, and the plains of Hindostan are tributary to its praise. Nay, more, what is the peculiar pride of our age, the Bible may now circulate its consolations and instructions among the poor and forlorn of every land, in their native dialect. Such is the triumph of letters; such is the triumph of christian benevolence.

With such a demand for books, with such facilities of intercourse, it is no wonder, that reading should cease to be a mere luxury, and should be classed among the necessities of life. Authors may now, with a steady confidence, boast, that they possess a hold on the human mind, which grapples closer and mightier than all others. They may feel sure, that every just sentiment, every enlightened opinion, every earnest breathing after excellence will awaken kindred sympathies from the rising to the setting sun.

Nor should it be overlooked, what a beneficial impulse has been thus communicated to education among the female sex. If christianity may be said to have given a permanent elevation to woman, as an intellectual and moral being, it is as true, that the present age, above all others, has given play to her genius, and taught us to reverence its influence. It was the fashion of other times to treat the literary acquirements of the sex, as starched pedantry, or vain pretensions; to stigmatize them as inconsistent with those domestic affections and virtues, which constitute the charm of society. We had abundant homilies read upon their amiable weaknesses and sentimental delicacy, upon their timid gentleness and submissive dependence; as if to taste the fruit of knowledge were a deadly sin, and ignorance were the sole guardian of innocence, Their whole lives were "sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought," and concealment of intellectual power was often resorted to, to escape the dangerous imputation of masculine strength. In the higher walks of life, the satirist was not without color for the suggestion, that it was

“ A youth of folly, an old age of cards ;”

and that elsewhere, “ most women had no character at all,” beyond that of purity and devotion to their families. Admirable as are these qualities, it seemed an abuse of the gifts of Providence to deny to mothers the power of instructing their children, to wives the privilege of sharing the intellectual pursuits of their husbands, to sisters and daughters the delight of ministering knowledge in the fireside circle, to youth and beauty the charm of refined sense, to age and infirmity the consolation of studies, which elevate the soul and gladden the listless hours of despondency.

These things have in a great measure passed away. The prejudices, which dishonored the sex, have yielded to the influence of truth. By slow but sure advances, education has extended itself through all ranks of female society. There is no longer any dread, lest the culture of science should foster that masculine boldness or restless independence, which alarms by its sallies, or wounds by its inconsistencies. We have seen that here, as every where else, knowledge is favorable to human virtue and human happiness; that the refinement of literature adds lustre to the devotion of piety; that true learning, like true taste, is modest and unostentatious; that grace of manners receives a higher polish from the discipline of the schools; that cultivated genius sheds a cheering light over domestic duties, and its very sparkles, like those of the diamond, attest at once its power and its purity. There is not a rank of female society, however high, which does not pay homage to literature, or that would not blush even at the suspicion of that ignorance, which a half century ago was neither uncommon nor discreditable. There is not a parent, whose pride may not glow at the thought, that his daughter's happiness is in a great measure within her own command, whether she keeps the cool sequestered vale of life, or visits the busy walks of fashion.

A new path is thus open for female exertion, to al-

leviate the pressure of misfortune, without any supposed sacrifice of dignity or modesty. Man no longer aspires to an exclusive dominion in authorship. He has rivals or allies in almost every department of knowledge; and they are to be found among those, whose elegance of manners and blamelessness of life command his respect, as much as their talents excite his admiration. Who is there, that does not contemplate with enthusiasm the precious fragments of Elizabeth Smith, the venerable learning of Elizabeth Carter, the elevated piety of Hannah More, the persuasive sense of Mrs. Barbauld, the elegant memoirs of her accomplished niece, the bewitching fictions of Madame D'Arblay, the vivid, picturesque, and terrific imagery of Mrs. Radcliffe, the glowing poetry of Mrs. Hemans, the matchless wit, the inexhaustible conversations, the fine character painting, the practical instructions of Miss Edgeworth, the great KNOWN, standing in her own department by the side of the great UNKNOWN?

Another circumstance, illustrative of the character of our age, is the bold and fearless spirit of its speculations. Nothing is more common in the history of mankind, than a servile adoption of received opinions, and a timid acquiescence in whatever is established. It matters not, whether a doctrine or institution owes its existence to accident or design, to wisdom, or ignorance, or folly, there is a natural tendency to give it an undue value in proportion to its antiquity. What is obscure in its origin warms and gratifies the imagination. What in its progress has insinuated itself into the general habits and manners of a nation, becomes embedded in the solid mass of society. It is only at distant intervals, from an aggregation of causes, that some stirring revolution breaks up the old foundations, or some mighty genius storms and overthrows the entrenchments of error. Who would believe, if history did not record the fact, that the metaphysics of Aristotle, or rather the misuse of his metaphysics, held the human mind in bondage for two thou-

sand years? that Galileo was imprisoned for proclaiming the true theory of the solar system? that the magnificent discoveries of Sir Isaac Newton encountered strong opposition from philosophers? that Locke's 'Essay on the Human Understanding,' found its way with infinite difficulty into the studies of the English Universities? that Lord Bacon's method of induction never reached its splendid triumphs until our day? that the doctrine of the divine right of kings, and the absolute allegiance of subjects, constituted nearly the whole theory of government from the fall of the Roman Republic to the seventeenth century; that Christianity itself was overlaid and almost buried for many centuries, by the dreamy comments of monks, the superstitions of fanatics, and the traditions of the church? that it was an execrable sin throughout Christendom to read and circulate the Holy Scriptures in the vulgar tongue? Nay, that it is still a crime in some nations, of which the Inquisition would take no very indulgent notice, even if the Head of the Catholic Church should not feel, that bible societies deserve his denunciation? Even the great reformers of the Protestant Church left their work but half done, or rather came to it with notions far too limited for its successful accomplishment. They combated errors and abuses, and laid the broad foundations of a more rational faith. But they were themselves insensible to the just rights and obligations of religious inquiry. They thought all error intolerable; but they forgot in their zeal, that the question, what was truth, was open to all for discussion. They assumed to themselves the very infallibility, which they rebuked in the Romish Church; and as unrelentingly persecuted heresies of opinion, as those, who had sat for ages in the judgment seat of St. Peter. They allowed, indeed, that all men had a right to inquire; but they thought, that all must, if honest, come to the same conclusion with themselves; that the full extent of christian liberty was the liberty of adopting those opinions, which they promulgated as true. The unrestrained right of private judgment,

the glorious privilege of a free conscience, as now established in this favored land, was farther from their thoughts, even than Popery itself. I would not be unjust to these great men. The fault was less theirs than that of the age, in which they lived. They partook only of that spirit of infirmity, which religion itself may not wholly extinguish in its sincere, but over zealous votaries. It is their glory to have laid the deep, and, I trust, the imperishable foundations of Protestantism. May it be ours to finish the work, as they would have done it, if they had been permitted to enjoy the blessed light of these latter times. But let not Protestants boast of their justice or their charity, while they continue to deny an equality of rights to the Catholics.

The progress of the spirit of free inquiry cannot escape the observation of the most superficial examiner of history. The press, by slow but firm steps, first felt its way, and began its attacks upon the outworks of received opinions. One error after another silently crumbled into the dust, until success seemed to justify the boldest experiments. Opinions in science, in physics, in philosophy, in morals, in religion, in literature have been subjected to the severest scrutiny; and many, which had grown hoary under the authority of ages, have been quietly conveyed to their last home with scarcely a solitary mourner to grace their obsequies. The contest, indeed, between old and new opinions has been, and continues to be, maintained with great obstinacy and ability on all sides, and has forced even the sluggish into the necessity of thinking for themselves. Scholars have been driven to arm themselves for attack, as well as for defence; and in a literary warfare, nearly universal, have been obliged to make their appeals to the living judgment of the public for protection, as well as for encouragement.

The effects of this animated and free discussion have, in general, been very salutary. There is not a single department of life, which has not been invigo-

rated by its influence, nor a single profession, which has not partaken of its success.

In jurisprudence, which reluctantly admits any ~~new~~ adjunct, and counts in its train a thousand champions ready to rise in defence of its formularies and technical rules, the victory has been brilliant and decisive. The civil and the common law have yielded to the pressure of the times, and have adopted much, which philosophy and experience have recommended, although it stood upon no text of the Pandects, and claimed no support from the feudal policy. Commercial law, at least so far as England and America are concerned, is the creation of the eighteenth century. It started into life with the genius of Lord Mansfield, and gathering in its course whatever was valuable in the earlier institutes of foreign countries, has reflected back upon them its own superior lights, so as to become the guide and oracle of the commercial world. If my own feelings do not mislead me, the profession itself has also acquired a liberality of opinion, a comprehensiveness of argumentation, a sympathy with the other pursuits of life, and a lofty eloquence, which, if ever before, belonged to it only in the best days of the best orators of antiquity. It was the bitter scoff of other times, approaching to the sententiousness of a proverb, that to be a good lawyer was to be an indifferent statesman. The profession has outlived the truth of the sarcasm. At the present moment England may count lawyers among her most gifted statesmen; and in America, I need but appeal to those, who hear me, for the fact, our most eminent statesmen have been, nay, still are the brightest ornaments of our bar.

The same improving spirit has infused itself into the body of legislation and political economy. I may not adventure upon this extensive topic. But I would for a moment advert to the more benignant character manifested in the criminal law. Harsh and vindictive punishments have been discountenanced or abolished.

The sanguinary codes, over which humanity wept, and philosophy shuddered, have felt the potent energy of reform, and substituted for agonizing terror the gentle spirit of mercy. America has taken the lead in this glorious march of philanthropy, under the banners of that meek sect, which does good by stealth, and blushes to find it fame. There is not in the code of the Union, and probably not in that of any single State, more than ten crimes, to which the sober judgment of legislation now affixes the punishment of death. England, indeed, counts in her bloody catalogue more than one hundred and sixty capital offences; but the dawn of a brighter day is opening upon her. After years of doubtful struggle, the meliorations suggested by the lamented Sir Samuel Romilly have forced their way through Parliament to the throne; and an enlightened ministry is redeeming her from this reproach upon her national character.

In medicine, throughout all its branches, more extraordinary changes have taken place. Here, indeed, inductive philosophy looks for some of its fairest trophies. In anatomy, in physiology, in pharmacy, in therapeutics, instructed skill, patient observation, and accurate deduction have been substituted for vague conjecture, and bold pretension. Instead of mystical compounds, and nostrums, and panaceas, science has introduced its powerful simples, and thus given energy and certainty to practice. We dream no longer over the favorite theories of the art succeeding each other in endless progression. We are content to adopt a truer course; to read nature in her operations; to compel her to give up her secrets to the expostulations of her ministers, and to answer the persevering interrogatories of her worshippers. Chemistry by its brilliant discoveries, and careful analysis, has unfolded laws, which surprise us by their simplicity, as well as by the extent of their operations. By its magic touch the very elements of things seem decomposed, and to stand in disembodied essences before us.

In theology a new era has commenced. From the days of Grotius almost to our own, a sluggish indifference to critical learning fastened upon most of those, who administered the high solemnities of religion. Here and there, indeed, a noble spirit was seen, like Old Mortality, wiping away the ancient dust and retracing the fading lines, and in his zeal for truth undergoing almost a martyrdom. But the mass of professed theologians slumbered over the received text in easy security, or poured the distillations of one commentary into another, giving little improvement to the flavor and none to the substance. They were at length roused by a spirit of another sort, which by ridicule, or argument, or denunciation of abuses, was attempting to sap the very foundations of Christianity. It made its approaches in silence, until it had attained strength enough for an open assault; and at last, in a moment of political revolution, it erected the standard of infidelity in the very centre of Christendom. Fortunately, the critical studies of the scholars of the old world enabled them to meet the difficulties of the occasion. The immense collations of manuscripts and various readings by such men, as Mills and Wetstein and Kennicott, prepared the way for a more profound investigation of the genuineness and authenticity of the Scriptures. And the sober sense and unwearied diligence of our age have given to the principles of interpretation an accuracy and authority, to biblical researches a dignity and certainty, to practical as well as doctrinal theology a logic and illustration, unparalleled in the annals of the Church. If Christianity has been assailed in our day with uncommon ability, it has never been defended with more various learning. If it has surrendered here and there an interpolated passage, it has placed almost beyond the reach of doubt the general integrity of the text. If it has ceased in some favored lands to claim the civil arm for its protection, it has established itself in the hearts of men by all, which genius could bring to illumine, or eloquence to grace its sublime truths.

In pure mathematics and physical science there has been a correspondent advancement. The discoveries of Newton have been followed out and demonstrated by new methods and analyses to an extent, which would surprise that great philosopher himself, if he were now living. I need but name such men as La Grange and La Place. By means of observations, the Heavens have been, if I may so say, circumnavigated, and every irregularity and perturbation of the motions of the heavenly bodies ascertained to depend upon the same eternal law of gravitation, and to result in the harmonious balance of forces. But it is in physical science, and especially in its adaptation to arts of life, that the present age may claim precedence of all others. I have already alluded to chemistry, which has enabled us to fix and discharge colors with equal certainty; now to imitate the whiteness of the driven snow, and now the loveliness of the Tyrian dyes. But who can measure the extent of the changes in agriculture, manufactures and commerce, produced by the steam-engine of Watt, by the cotton machinery of Arkwright, by the power-looms of a later period, by the cotton-gin of Whitney, and though last, not least, by the steam-boat of Fulton? When I name these, I select but a few among the inventions of our age, in which nature and art minister alternately to the wants, and the triumphs of man.

If in metaphysics no brilliant discoveries have rewarded the industry of its votaries, it may nevertheless be said, that the laws of the mind have been investigated with no common success. They have been illustrated by a fuller display of the doctrine of association of Hartley, by the common sense of Reid, by the acute discrimination of Brown, and by the incomparable elegance of Dugald Stewart. If, indeed, in this direction any new discoveries are to be expected, it appears to me, with great deference, that they must be sought through more exact researches into that branch of physiology, which respects the structure and func-

tions of those organs, which are immediately connected with the operations of the mind.

I have but glanced at most of the preceding subjects, many of which are remote from the studies which have engaged my life, and to all of which, I am conscious, that I am unable to do even moderate justice.

But it is to the department of general and miscellaneous literature, and above all, of English literature, that we may look with pride and confidence. Here the genius of the age has displayed itself in innumerable varieties of form and beauty, from the humble page, which presumes to teach the infant mind the first lines of thought, to the lofty works, which discourse of history, and philosophy, and ethics, and government; from the voyager, who collects his budget of wonders for the amusement of the idle, to the gallant adventurer to the Pole, and the scientific traveller on the Andes. Poetry, too, has dealt out its enchantments with profuse liberality, now startling us with its visionary horrors and superhuman pageants, now scorching us with its fierce and caustic satire, now lapping us in Elysium by the side of sunny shores, or lovely lakes, or haunted groves, or consecrated ruins. It is, indeed, no exaggeration of the truth to declare, that polite literature, from the light essay to the most profound disquisition, can enumerate more excellent works, as the production of the last fifty years, than of all former ages since the revival of letters.

Periodical literature has elevated itself from an amusement of cultivated minds, or a last resort of impoverished authors, to the first rank of composition, in which the proudest are not ashamed to labor, and the highest may gain fame and consequence. A half century ago a single magazine and a single review almost sufficed the whole reading public of England and America. At present a host crowd round us, from the gossamery repository, which adorns the toilet, to the grave review, which discusses the fate of empires.

arraigns the counsels of statesmen, expounds all mysteries in policy and science, or, stooping from such pursuits, condescends, like other absolute powers, sometimes to crush an author to death, and sometimes to elevate him to a height where he faints from the mere sense of giddiness. We have our journals of science and journals of arts; the New Monthly with the refreshing genius of Campbell, and the Old Monthly with the companionable qualities of a familiar friend. We have the Quarterly Reviewers, the loyal defenders of Church and State, the *laudatores temporis acti*, the champions, ay, and exemplars too, of classical learning, the admirers of ancient establishments and ancient opinions. We have on the other hand the Edinburgh, the bold advocates of reform, and still bolder political economists, hunting out public abuses, and alarming idle gentlemen pensioners with tales of misapplied charities; now deriding with bitter taunts the dull but busy gleaners in literature; now brightening their pages with the sunshine of wit; and now paying homage to genius by expounding its labors in language of transcendent felicity. One might approach nearer home, and, if it were not dangerous to rouse the attention of critics, might tell of a certain North American, which has done as much to give a solid cast to our literature, and a national feeling to our authors, as any single event since the peace of 1783.

Another interesting accompaniment of the literature of the age is its superior moral purity over former productions. The obscene jests, the low ribaldry, and the coarse allusions, which shed a disastrous light on so many pages of misguided genius in former times, find no sympathy in ours. He, who would now command respect, must write with pure sentiments and elevated feelings; he, who would now please, must be chaste as well as witty, and moral as well as brilliant. Fiction itself is restrained to the decencies of life; and whether in the drama, or the novel, or the song, with a few melancholy exceptions, it seeks no longer to kindle fires, which would consume the youthful enthusiast, or

to instil precepts, which would blast the loveliness of the innocent.

But let it not be imagined, that in the present state of things there is nothing for regret and nothing for admonition. The picture of the age, when truly drawn, is not wholly composed of lights. There are shades, which disturb the beauty of the coloring, and points of reflection, where there is no longer harmony in the proportions.

The unavoidable tendency of free speculation is to lead to occasional extravagances. When once the reverence for authority is shaken, there is apt to grow up in its stead a cold scepticism respecting established opinions. Their very antiquity under such circumstances betrays us into suspicion of their truth. The overthrow of error itself urges on a feverish excitement for discussion, and a restless desire for novelty, which blind, if they do not confound, the judgment. Thus, the human mind not unfrequently passes from one extreme to another; from one of implicit faith, to one of absolute incredulity.

There is not a remark deducible from the history of mankind more important, than that advanced by Mr. Burke, that 'to innovate is not to reform.' That is, if I may venture to follow out the sense of this great man, that innovation is not necessarily improvement; that novelty is not necessarily excellence; that what was deemed wisdom in former times, is not necessarily folly in ours; that the course of the human mind has not been to present a multitude of truths in one great step of its glory, but to gather them up insensibly in its progress, and to place them at distances, sometimes at vast distances, as guides or warnings to succeeding ages. If Greece and Rome did not solve all the problems of civil government, or enunciate the admirable theorem of representative legislation, it should never be forgotten, that from them we have learned those principles of liberty, which in the worst of times have consoled the patriot for all his sufferings. If they cannot boast of the various attainments of our

days, they may point out to us the lessons of wisdom, the noble discoveries and the imperishable labors of their mighty dead. It is not necessarily error to follow the footsteps of ancient philosophy, to reverence the precepts of ancient criticism, to meditate over the pages of ancient exploits, or to listen to the admonitions of ancient oratory.

We may even gather instruction from periods of another sort, in which there was a darkness, which might be felt, as well as seen. Where is to be found a nobler institution than the trial by jury, that impregnable bulwark of civil liberty? Yet it belongs to ages of Gothic darkness, or Saxon barbarism. Where is there a more enduring monument of political wisdom, than the separation of the judicial from legislative powers? Yet it was the slow production of ages, which are obscured by the mists of time. Where shall we point out an invention, whose effects have been more wide, or more splendid, than those of the mariner's compass? Yet five centuries have rolled over the grave of its celebrated discoverer. Where shall we find the true logic of physical science so admirably stated, as in the *Novum Organum* of him, who more than two centuries ago saw, as in vision, and foretold, as in prophecy, the sublime discoveries of these latter days?

This is a topic, which may not wholly be passed over, since it presents some of the dangers, to which we are exposed, and calls upon us to watch the progress of opinion, and guard against the seductive influence of novelties. The busy character of the age is perpetually pressing forward all sorts of objections to established truths in politics, and morals, and literature. In order to escape from the imputation of triteness, some authors tax their ingenuity to surprise us with bold paradoxes, or run down with wit and ridicule the doctrines of common sense, appealing sometimes to the ignorance, and sometimes to the pride of their readers. Their object is not so much to produce what is true, as what is striking; what is profound, as

what is interesting; what will endure the test of future criticism, as what will buoy itself up on the current of a shallow popularity. In the rage for originality, the old standards of taste are deserted, or treated with cold indifference; and thus false and glittering thoughts, and hurried and flippant fantasies are substituted for exact and philosophical reasoning.

There is, too, a growing propensity to disparage the importance of classical learning. Many causes, especially in England and America, have conduced to this result. The signal success which has followed the enterprises in physical science, in mechanics, in chemistry, in civil engineering, and the ample rewards both of fortune and fame attendant upon that success, have had a very powerful influence upon the best talents of both countries. There is, too, in the public mind a strong disposition to turn every thing to a practical account, to deal less with learning, and more with experiment; to seek the solid comforts of opulence, rather than the indulgence of mere intellectual luxury. On the other hand, from the increase of materials, as well as of critical skill, high scholarship is a prize of no easy attainment; and when attained, it slowly receives public favor, and still more slowly reaches the certainty of wealth. Indeed, it is often combined with a contemplative shyness, and sense of personal independence, which yield little to policy, and with difficulty brook opposition. The honors of the world rarely cluster round it, and it cherishes with most enthusiasm those feelings, which the active pursuits of life necessarily impair, if they do not wholly extinguish. The devotion to it, therefore, where it exists, often becomes our exclusive passion; and thus the gratification of it becomes the end, instead of the means of life. Instances of extraordinary success by mere scholarship are more rare than in other professions. It is not, then to be wondered at, that the prudence of some minds, and the ambition of others, should shrink from labors, which demand days and nights of study, and hold out rewards, which are dis-

tant, or pleasures, which are for the most part purely intellectual.

Causes like these, in an age, which scrutinizes and questions the pretensions of every department of literature, have contributed to bring into discussion the use and the value of classical learning. I do not stand up on this occasion to vindicate its claims, or extol its merits. That would be a fit theme for one of our most distinguished scholars, in a large discourse. But I may not withhold my willing testimony to its excellence, nor forget the fond regret, with which I left its enticing studies for the discipline of more severe instructors.

The importance of classical learning to professional education is so obvious, that the surprise is, that it could ever have become matter of disputation. I speak not of its power in refining the taste, in disciplining the judgment, in invigorating the understanding, or in warming the heart with elevated sentiments; but of its power of direct, positive, necessary instruction. Until the eighteenth century, the mass of science in its principal branches was deposited in the dead languages, and much of it still reposes there. To be ignorant of these languages is to shut out the lights of former times, or to examine them only through the glimmerings of inadequate translations. What should we say of the jurist, who never aspired to learn the maxims of law and equity, which adorn the Roman codes? What of the physician, who could deliberately surrender all the knowledge heaped up for so many centuries in the latinity of continental Europe? What of the minister of religion, who should choose not to study the Scriptures in the original tongue, and should be content to trust his faith and his hopes, for time and for eternity, to the dimness of translations, which may reflect the literal import, but rarely can reflect with unbroken force the beautiful spirit of the text? Shall he, whose vocation it is "to allure to brighter worlds and lead the way," be himself the blind leader of the blind? Shall he follow the com-

mentaries of fallible man, instead of gathering the true sense from the Gospels themselves? Shall he venture upon the exposition of divine truths, whose studies have never aimed at the first principles of interpretation? Shall he proclaim the doctrines of salvation, who knows not, and cares not, whether he preaches an idle gloss or the genuine text of revelation? If a theologian may not pass his life in collating the various readings, he may, and ought to aspire to that criticism, which illustrates religion by all the resources of human learning; which studies the manners and institutions of the age and country, in which Christianity was first promulgated; which kindles an enthusiasm for its precepts by familiarity with the persuasive language of Him, who poured out his blessings on the mount, and of him, at whose impressive appeal Felix trembled.

I pass over all consideration of the written treasures of antiquity, which have survived the wreck of empires and dynasties, of monumental trophies and triumphal arches, of palaces of princes and temples of the Gods. I pass over all consideration of those admired compositions, in which wisdom speaks, as with a voice from Heaven; of those sublime efforts of poetical genius, which still freshen, as they pass from age to age, in undying vigor; of those finished histories, which still enlighten and instruct governments in their duty and their destiny; of those matchless orations, which roused nations to arms, and chained senates to the chariot wheels of all-conquering eloquence. These all may now be read in our vernacular tongue. Ay, as one remembers the face of a dead friend by gathering up the broken fragments of his image—as one listens to the tale of a dream twice told—as one catches the roar of the ocean in the ripple of a rivulet—as one sees the blaze of noon in the first glimmer of twilight.

There is one objection, however, on which I would for a moment dwell, because it has a commanding influence over many minds, and is clothed with a specious

importance. It is often said, that there have been eminent men and eminent writers, to whom the ancient languages were unknown; men, who have risen by the force of their talents, and writers, who have written with a purity and ease, which hold them up as models for imitation. On the other hand, it is as often said, that scholars do not always compose either with elegance or chasteness; that their diction is sometimes loose and harsh, and sometimes ponderous and affected. Be it so. I am not disposed to call in question the accuracy of either statement. But I would nevertheless say, that the presence of classical learning was not the cause of the faults of the one class, nor the absence of it the cause of the excellence of the other. And I would put this fact, as an answer to all such reasonings, that there is not a single language of modern Europe, in which literature has made any considerable advances, which is not directly of Roman origin, or has not incorporated into its very structure many, very many of the idioms and peculiarities of the ancient tongues. The English language affords a strong illustration of the truth of this remark. It abounds with words and meanings drawn from classical sources. Innumerable phrases retain the symmetry of their ancient dress. Innumerable expressions have received their vivid tints from the beautiful dyes of Roman and Grecian roots. If scholars, therefore, do not write our language with ease, or purity, or elegance, the cause must lie somewhat deeper than a conjectural ignorance of its true diction.

But I am prepared to yield still more to the force of the objection. I do not deny, that a language may be built up without the aid of any foreign materials, and be at once flexible for speech and graceful for composition. That the literature of a nation may be splendid and instructive, full of interest and beauty in thought and in diction, which has no kindred with classical learning; that in the vast stream of time it may run its own current unstained by the admixture of surrounding languages; that it may realize the ancient fable, "*Doris*

amara suam non intermisceat undam; that it may retain its own flavor, and its own bitter saltness too. But I do deny, that such a national literature does in fact exist in modern Europe, in that community of nations, of which we form a part, and to whose fortunes, and pursuits in literature and arts we are bound by all our habits, and feelings, and interests. There is not a single nation from the North to the South of Europe, from the bleak shores of the Baltic to the bright plains of immortal Italy, whose literature is not embedded in the very elements of classical learning. The literature of England is in an emphatic sense the production of her scholars; of men, who have cultivated letters in her universities, and colleges, and grammar schools; of men, who thought any life too short, chiefly, because it left some relic of antiquity unmastered, and any other fame humble, because it faded in the presence of Roman and Grecian genius. He, who studies English literature without the lights of classical learning loses half the charms of its sentiments and style, of its force and feelings, of its delicate touches, of its delightful allusions, of its illustrative associations. Who, that reads the poetry of Gray, does not feel, that it is the refinement of classical taste, which gives such inexpressible vividness and transparency to his diction? Who, that reads the concentrated sense and melodious versification of Dryden and Pope, does not perceive in them the disciples of the old school, whose genius was inflamed by the heroic verse, the terse satire, and the playful wit of antiquity? Who, that meditates over the strains of Milton, does not feel, that he drank deep

—At “Siloa’s brook, that flow’d
Fast by the oracle of God”—

that the fires of his magnificent mind were lighted by coals from ancient altars?

It is no exaggeration to declare, that he, who pro-

poses to abolish classical studies, proposes to render in a great measure inert and unedifying the mass of English literature for three centuries; to rob us of much of the glory of the past, and much of the instruction of future ages; to blind us to excellences, which few may hope to equal, and none to surpass; to annihilate associations, which are interwoven with our best sentiments, and give to distant times and countries a presence and reality, as if they were in fact our own.

There are dangers of another sort, which beset the literature of the age. The constant demand for new works and the impatience for fame, not only stimulate authors to an undue eagerness for strange incidents, singular opinions, and vain sentimentalities, but their style and diction are infected with the faults of extravagance and affectation. The old models of fine writing and good taste are departed from, not because they can be excelled, but because they are known, and want freshness; because, if they have a finished coloring, they have no strong contrasts to produce effect. The consequence is, that opposite extremes in the manner of composition prevail at the same moment, or succeed each other with a fearful rapidity. On one side are to be found authors, who profess to admire the easy flow and simplicity of the old style, the naturalness of familiar prose, and the tranquil dignity of higher compositions. But in their desire to be simple, they become extravagantly loose and inartificial; in their familiarity, feeble and drivelling; and in their more aspiring efforts, cold, abstract, and harsh. On the other side, there are those, who have no love for polished perfection of style, for sustained and unimpassioned accuracy, for persuasive, but equable diction. They require more hurried tones, more stirring spirit, more glowing and irregular sentences. There must be intensity of thought and intensity of phrase at every turn. There must be bold and abrupt transitions, strong relief, vivid coloring, forcible expression. If these are present,

all other faults are forgiven, or forgotten. Excitement is produced, and taste may slumber.

Examples of each sort may be easily found in our miscellaneous literature among minds of no ordinary cast. Our poetry deals less than formerly with the sentiments and feelings belonging to ordinary life. It has almost ceased to be didactic, and in its scenery and descriptions reflects too much the peculiarities and morbid visions of eccentric minds. How little do we see of the simple beauty, the chaste painting, the unconscious moral grandeur of Crabbe and Cowper? We have, indeed, successfully dethroned the heathen deities. The Muses are no longer invoked by every unhappy inditer of verse. The Naiads no longer inhabit our fountains, nor the Dryads our woods. The River Gods no longer rise, like old father Thames,

“ And the hush'd waves glide softly to the shore.”

In these respects our poetry is more true to nature, and more conformable to just taste. But it still insists too much on extravagant events, characters and passions, far removed from common life, and farther removed from general sympathy. It seeks to be wild, and fiery, and startling; and sometimes, in its caprices, low and childish. It portrays natural scenery, as if it were always in violent commotion. It describes human emotions, as if man were always in ecstasies or horrors. Whoever writes for future ages must found himself upon feelings and sentiments belonging to the mass of mankind. Whoever paints from nature will rarely depart from the general character of repose impressed upon her scenery, and will prefer truth to the ideal sketches of the imagination.

Our prose too has a tendency to become somewhat too ambitious and intense. Even in newspaper discussions of the merits or misdeeds of rulers, there is a secret dread of neglect, unless the page gives out the sententious pungency or sarcastic scorn of Junius.

Familiar, idiomatic prose seems less attractive than in former times. Yet one would suppose, that we might follow with safety the unaffected purity of Addison in criticism, and the graceful ease of Goldsmith in narrative. The neat and lively style of Swift loses nothing of its force by the simplicity, with which it aims to put "proper words in proper places." The correspondence of Cowper is not less engaging, because it utters no cant phrases, no sparkling conceits, and no pointed repartees.

But these faults may be considered as temporary, and are far from universal. There is another, however, which is more serious and important in its character, and is the common accompaniment of success. It is the strong temptation of distinguished authors to premature publication of their labors, to hasty and unfinished sketches, to fervid but unequal efforts. He who writes for immortality, must write slowly, and correct freely. It is not the applause of the present day, or the deep interest of a temporary topic, or the consciousness of great powers, or the striking off of a vigorous discourse, which will ensure a favorable verdict from posterity. It was a beautiful remark of Sir Joshua Reynolds "that great works, which are to live, and stand the criticism of posterity, are not performed at a heat." "I remember," said he, "when I was at Rome, looking at the fighting gladiator, in company with an eminent sculptor, and I expressed my admiration of the skill, with which the whole is composed, and the minute attention of the artist to the change of every muscle in that momentary exertion of strength. He was of opinion, that a work so perfect, required nearly the whole life of man to perform." What an admonition! What a melancholy reflection to those, who deem the literary fame of the present age the best gift to posterity. How many of our proudest geniuses have written, and continue to write with a swiftness, which almost rivals the operations of the press. How many are urged on to the ruin of their immortal hopes by that public favor, which receives with acclamations

every new offspring of their pen. If Milton had written thus, we should have found no scholar of our day, no "Christian Examiner," portraying the glory of his character with the enthusiasm of a kindred spirit. If Pope had written thus, we should have had no fierce contests respecting his genius and poetical attainments by our Byrons, and Bowleses, and Roscoes. If Virgil had written thus, he might have chanted his verses to the courtly Augustus; but Marcellus and his story would have perished. If Horace had written thus, he might have enchanted gay friends and social parties; but it would never have been said of his composition, *decies repetita placebit*.

Such are some of the considerations, which have appeared to me fit to be addressed to you on the present occasion. It may be, that I have overrated their importance, and I am not unconscious of the imperfections of my own execution of the task.

To us, Americans, nothing, indeed, can, or ought to be indifferent, that respects the cause of science and literature. We have taken a stand among the nations of the earth, and have successfully asserted our claim to political equality. We possess an enviable elevation, so far as concerns the structure of our government, our political policy, and the moral energy of our institutions. If we are not without rivals in these respects, we are scarcely behind any, even in the general estimate of foreign nations themselves. But our claims are far more extensive. We assert an equality of voice and vote in the republic of letters, and assume for ourselves the right to decide on the merits of others, as well as to vindicate our own. These are lofty pretensions, which are never conceded without proofs, and are severely scrutinized, and slowly admitted by the grave judges in the tribunal of letters. We have not placed ourselves as humble aspirants, seeking our way to higher rewards under the guardianship of experienced guides. We ask admission into the temple of fame, as joint heirs of the inheritance, capable in the manhood of our strength of maintaining our title.

We contend for prizes with nations, whose intellectual glory has received the homage of centuries. France, Italy, Germany, England, can point to the past for monuments of their genius and skill, and to the present with the undismayed confidence of veterans. It is not for us to retire from the ground, which we have chosen to occupy, nor to shut our eyes against the difficulties of maintaining it. It is not by a few vain boasts, or vainer self-complacency, or rash daring, that we are to win our way to the first literary distinction. We must do, as others have done before us. We must serve in the hard school of discipline; we must invigorate our powers by the studies of other times. We must guide our footsteps by those stars, which have shone, and still continue to shine with inextinguishable light in the firmament of learning. Nor have we any reason for despondency. There is that in American character, which has never yet been found unequal to its purpose. There is that in American enterprise, which shrinks not, and faints not, and fails not in its labors. We may say with honest pride,

“ Man is the nobler growth our realms supply,
And souls are ripen'd in our Northern sky.”

We may not then shrink from a rigorous examination of our own deficiencies in science and literature. If we have but a just sense of our wants, we have gained half the victory. If we but face our difficulties, they will fly before us. Let us not discredit our just honors by exaggerating little attainments. There are those in other countries, who can keenly search out, and boldly expose every false pretension. There are those in our own country, who would scorn a reputation ill founded in fact, and ill sustained by examples. We have solid claims upon the affection and respect of mankind. Let us not jeopard them by a false shame, or an ostentatious pride. The growth of two hundred years is healthy, lofty, expansive. The roots have shot deep and far; the branches are strong and

broad. I trust that many, many centuries to come will witness the increase and vigor of the stock. Never, never, may any of our posterity have just occasion to speak of our country in the expressiveness of Indian rhetoric, "It is an aged hemlock; it is dead at the top."

I repeat it, we have no reason to blush for what we have been, or what we are. But we shall have much to blush for, if, when the highest attainments of the human intellect are within our reach, we surrender ourselves to an obstinate indifference, or shallow mediocrity; if, in our literary career we are content to rank behind the meanest principality of Europe. Let us not waste our time in seeking for apologies for our ignorance, where it exists, or in framing excuses to conceal it. Let our short reply to all such suggestions be, like the answer of a noble youth on another occasion, that we know the fact, and are every day getting the better of it.

What, then, may I be permitted to ask, are our attainments in science and literature, in comparison with those of other nations in our age? I do not ask, if we have fine scholars, accomplished divines, and skilful physicians. I do not ask, if we have lawyers, who might excite a generous rivalry in Westminster Hall. I do not ask, if we have statesmen, who would stand side by side with those of the old world in foresight, in political wisdom, in effective debate. I do not ask if we have mathematicians, who may claim kindred with the distinguished of Europe. I do not ask, if we have historians, who have told with fidelity and force the story of our deeds and our sufferings. I do not ask, if we have critics, and poets, and philologists, whose compositions add lustre to the age. I know full well, that there are such. But they stand, as light-houses on the coasts of our literature, shining with a cheering brightness, it is true, but too often at distressing distances.

In almost every department of knowledge the land of our ancestors annually pours forth from its press

many volumes; the results of deep research, of refined taste, and of rich and various learning. The continent of Europe, too, burns with a generous zeal for science, even in countries, where the free exercise of thought is prohibited, and a stunted poverty presses heavily on the soul of enterprise. Our own contributions to literature are useful and creditable; but it can rarely be said, that they belong to the highest class of intellectual effort. We have but recently entered upon classical learning for the purpose of cultivating its most profound studies, while Europe may boast of thousands of scholars engaged in this pursuit. The universities of Cambridge and Oxford count more than eight thousand students trimming their classical lamps, while we have not a single university, whose studies profess to be extensive enough to educate a Heyne, a Bentley, a Porson, or a Parr. There is not, perhaps, a single library in America sufficiently copious to have enabled Gibbon to verify the authorities for his immortal History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire. Our advances in divinity and law are probably as great, as in any branch of knowledge. Yet, until a late period, we never aspired to a deep and critical exposition of the Scriptures. We borrowed from Germany and England nearly all our materials, and are just struggling for the higher rewards of biblical learning. And in law, where our eminence is least of all questionable, there are those among us, who feel, that sufficient of its learning, and argument, and philosophy remains unmastered, to excite the ambition of the foremost advocates.

Let me not be misunderstood. I advert to these considerations, not to disparage our country, or its institutions, or its means of extensive, I had almost said, of universal education. But we should not deceive ourselves with the notion, that, because education is liberally provided for, the highest learning is within the scope of that education. Our schools neither aim at, nor accomplish such objects. There is not a more dangerous error than that, which would

sooth us into indolence, by encouraging the belief, that our literature is all, it can, or ought to be; that all beyond is shadowy and unsubstantial, the vain theories of the scientific, or the reveries of mere scholars. The admonition, which addresses itself to my countrymen respecting their deficiencies, ought to awaken new energy to overcome them. They are accustomed to grapple with difficulties. They should hold nothing, which human genius or human enterprise has yet attained, as beyond their reach. The motto on their literary banner should be, *Nec timeo nec sperno*. I have no fears for the future. It may not be our lot to see our celebrity in letters rival that of our public polity and free institutions. But the time cannot be far distant. It is scarcely prophecy to declare, that our children must and will enjoy it. They will see, not merely the breathing marble, and the speaking picture among their arts, but science and learning every where paying a voluntary homage to American genius.

There is, indeed, enough in our past history to flatter our pride, and encourage our exertions. We are of the lineage of the Saxons, the countrymen of Bacon, Locke and Newton, as well as of Washington, Franklin and Fulton. We have read the history of our forefathers. They were men full of piety, and zeal, and an unconquerable love of liberty. They also loved human learning, and deemed it second only to divine. Here, on this very spot, in the bosom of the wilderness, within ten short years after their voluntary exile, in the midst of cares, and privations, and sufferings, they found time to rear a little school, and dedicate it to God and the church. It has grown; it has flourished; it is the venerable university, to whose walls her grateful children annually come with more than filial affection. The sons of such ancestors can never dishonor their memories; the pupils of such schools can never be indifferent to the cause of letters.

There is yet more in our present circumstances to inspire us with a wholesome consciousness of our

powers, and our destiny. We have just passed the Jubilee of our Independence, and witnessed the prayers and gratitude of millions ascending to Heaven for our public and private blessings. That independence was the achievement, not of faction and ignorance, but of hearts as pure, and minds as enlightened, and judgments as sound, as ever graced the annals of mankind. Among the leaders were statesmen and scholars, as well as heroes and patriots. We have followed many of them to the tomb, blest with the honors of their country. We have been privileged yet more; we have lived to witness an almost miraculous event in the departure of two great authors of our independence on that memorable and blessed day of Jubilee.

I may not in this place presume to pronounce the funeral panegyric of these extraordinary men. It has been already done by some of the master spirits of our country, by men worthy of the task, worthy as Pericles to pronounce the honors of the Athenian dead. It was the beautiful saying of the Grecian orator, that "This whole earth is the sepulchre of illustrious men. Nor is it the inscriptions on the columns in their native soil alone, that show their merit; but the memorial of them, better than all inscriptions, in every foreign nation, repositied more durably in universal remembrance, than on their own tomb."

Such is the lot of Adams and Jefferson. They have lived, not for themselves, but for their country; not for their country alone, but for the world. They belong to history, as furnishing some of the best examples of disinterested and successful patriotism. They belong to posterity, as the instructors of all future ages in the principles of rational liberty and the rights of the people. They belong to us of the present age by their glory, by their virtues, and by their achievements. These are memorials, which can never perish. They will brighten with the lapse of time, and, as they loom on the ocean of eternity, will seem pre-

sent to the most distant generations of men. That voice of more than Roman eloquence, which urged and sustained the Declaration of independence, that voice, whose first and whose last accents were for his country, is indeed mute. It will never again rise in defence of the weak against popular excitement, and vindicate the majesty of law and justice. It will never again awaken a nation to arms to assert its liberties. It will never again instruct the public councils by its wisdom. It will never again utter its almost oracular thoughts in philosophical retirement. It will never again pour out its strains of parental affection, and in the domestic circle, give new force and fervor to the consolations of religion. The hand, too, which inscribed the Declaration of independence is indeed laid low. The weary head reposes on its mother earth. The mountain winds sweep by the narrow tomb, and all around has the loneliness of desolation. The stranger guest may no longer visit that hospitable home, and find him there, whose classical taste and various conversation lent a charm to every leisure hour; whose bland manners and social simplicity made every welcome doubly dear; whose expansive mind commanded the range of almost every art and science; whose political sagacity, like that of his illustrious coadjutor, read the fate and interests of nations, as with a second sight, and scented the first breath of tyranny in the passing gale; whose love of liberty, like his, was inflexible, universal, supreme; whose devotion to their common country, like his, never faltered in the worst, and never wearied in the best of times; whose public services ended but with life, carrying the long line of their illumination over sixty years; whose last thoughts exhibited the ruling passion of his heart, enthusiasm in the cause of education; whose last breathing committed his soul to God, and his offspring to his country.

Yes, Adams and Jefferson are gone from us forever—gone, as a sunbeam to revisit its native skies

—gone, as this mortal to put on immortality. Of them, of each of them, every American may exclaim ;

“ Ne’er to the chambers, where the mighty rest,
Since their foundation, came a nobler guest,
Nor e’er was to the bowers of bliss convey’d
A fairer spirit, or more welcome shade.”

We may not mourn over the departure of such men. We should rather hail it as a kind dispensation of Providence, to affect our hearts with new and livelier gratitude. They were not cut off in the blossom of their days, while yet the vigor of manhood flushed their cheeks, and the harvest of glory was ungathered. They fell not as martyr’s fall, seeing only in dim perspective the salvation of their country. They lived to enjoy the blessings, earned by their labors, and to realize all, which their fondest hopes had desired. The infirmities of life stole slowly and silently upon them, leaving still behind a cheerful serenity of mind. In peace, in the bosom of domestic affection, in the hallowed reverence of their countrymen, in the full possession of their faculties, they wore out the last remains of life, without a fear to cloud, with scarcely a sorrow to disturb its close. The joyful day of our Jubilee came over them with its refreshing influence. To them, indeed, it was “a great and good day.” The morning sun shone with softened lustre on their closing eyes. Its evening beams played lightly on their brows, calm in all the dignity of death. Their spirits escaped from these frail tenements without a struggle or a groan. Their death was gentle as an infant’s sleep. It was a long, lingering twilight, melting into the softest shade.

Fortunate men, so to have lived, and so to have died. Fortunate, to have gone hand in hand in the deeds of the revolution. Fortunate, in the generous rivalry of middle life. Fortunate, in deserving and receiving the highest honors of their country. Fortunate in old age to have rekindled their ancient

friendship with a holier flame. Fortunate, to have passed through the dark valley of the shadow of death together. Fortunate, to be indissolubly united in the memory and affections of their countrymen. Fortunate, above all, in an immortality of virtuous fame, on which history may with severe simplicity write the dying encomium of Pericles, "No citizen, through their means, ever put on mourning."

I may not dwell on this theme. It has come over my thoughts, and I could not wholly suppress the utterance of them. It was my principal intention to hold them up to my countrymen, not as statesmen, and patriots, but as scholars, as lovers of literature, as eminent examples of the excellence of the union of ancient learning with modern philosophy. Their youth was disciplined in classical studies; their active life was instructed by the prescriptive wisdom of antiquity; their old age was cheered by its delightful reminiscences. To them belongs the fine panegyric of Cicero, "*Erant in eis plurimæ litteræ, nec eæ vulgares, sed interiores quædam, et reconditæ; divina memoria, summa verborum et gravitas et elegantia; atque hæc omnia vitæ decorabat dignitas et integritas.*"

I will ask your indulgence only for a moment longer. Since our last anniversary, death has been unusually busy in thinning our numbers. I may not look on the right, or the left, without missing some of those, who stood by my side in my academic course, in the happy days spent within yonder venerable walls.

"These are counsellors, that feelingly persuade us, what we are," and what we must be. Shaw and Salisbury are no more. The one, whose modest worth and ingenuous virtue adorned a spotless life; the other, whose social kindness and love of letters made him welcome in every circle. But, what shall I say of Haven, with whom died a thousand hopes, not of his friends and family alone, but of his country. Nature had given him a strong and brilliant genius; and it was chastened and invigorated by grave, as well as elegant studies. Whatever belonged to human manners and

pursuits, to human interests and feelings, to government, or science, or literature, he endeavored to master with a scholar's diligence and taste. Few men have read so much, or so well. Few have united such manly sense with such attractive modesty. His thoughts and his style, his writings and his actions, were governed by a judgment, in which energy was combined with candor, and benevolence with deep unobtrusive, and fervid piety. His character may be summed up in a single line, for there

"was given
To Haven every virtue under Heaven."

He had just arrived at the point of his professional career, in which skill and learning begin to reap their proper reward. He was in possession of the principal blessings of life, of fortune, of domestic love, of universal respect. There are those, who had fondly hoped, when they should have passed away, he might be found here to pay a humble tribute to their memory. To Providence it has seemed fit to order otherwise, that it might teach us "what shadows we are, and what shadows we pursue." We may not mourn over such a loss, as those, who are without hope. That life is not too short, which has accomplished its highest destiny; that spirit may not linger here, which is purified for immortality.

A DISCOURSE,

ON THE LIVES AND CHARACTERS OF

THOMAS JEFFERSON AND JOHN ADAMS,

WHO BOTH DIED ON THE FOURTH OF JULY, 1826: DELIVERED, AT THE REQUEST OF THE CITIZENS OF WASHINGTON, IN THE HALL OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE UNITED STATES, ON THE NINETEENTH OCTOBER, 1826:

BY WILLIAM WIRT.



THE scenes which have been lately passing in our country, and of which this meeting is a continuance, are full of moral instruction. They hold up to the world a lesson of wisdom by which all may profit, if Heaven shall grant them the discretion to turn it to its use. The spectacle, in all its parts, has, indeed, been most solemn and impressive; and, though the first impulse be now past, the time has not yet come, and never will it come, when we can contemplate it without renewed emotion.

In the structure of their characters; in the course of their action; in the striking coincidences which marked their high career; in the lives and in the deaths of the illustrious men, whose virtues and services we have met to commemorate—and in that voice of admiration and gratitude which has since burst, with one accord, from the twelve millions of freemen who people these States, there is a moral sublimity which overwhelms the mind, and hushes all its powers into silent amazement!

The European, who should have heard the sound without apprehending the cause, would be apt to inquire, “What is the meaning of all this? what had

these men done to elicit this unanimous and splendid acclamation? Why has the whole American nation risen up, as one man, to do them honor, and offer to them this enthusiastic homage of the heart? Were they mighty warriors, and was the peal that we have heard, the shout of victory? Were they great commanders, returning from their distant conquests, surrounded with the spoils of war, and was this the sound of their triumphal procession? Were they covered with martial glory in any form, and was this 'the noisy wave of the multitude rolling back at their approach?' Nothing of all this: No; they were peaceful and aged patriots, who, having served their country together, through their long and useful lives, had now sunk together to the tomb. They had not fought battles; but they had formed and moved the great machinery of which battles were only a small, and, comparatively, trivial consequence. They had not commanded armies; but they had commanded the master springs of the nation, on which all its great political, as well as military movements depended. By the wisdom and energy of their counsels, and by the potent mastery of their spirits, they had contributed pre-eminently to produce a mighty Revolution which has changed the aspect of the world. A Revolution which, in one half of that world, has already restored man to his "long lost liberty," and government to its only legitimate object, the happiness of the People: and, on the other hemisphere, has thrown a light so strong, that even the darkness of despotism is beginning to recede. Compared with the solid glory of an achievement like this, what are battles, and what the pomp of war, but the poor and fleeting pageants of a theatre? What were the selfish and petty strides of Alexander, to conquer a little section of a savage world, compared with this generous, this magnificent advance towards the emancipation of the entire world!

And this, be it remembered, has been the fruit of intellectual exertion! the triumph of mind! What a

proud testimony does it bear to the character of our nation, that they are able to make a proper estimate of services like these! That while, in other countries, the senseless mob fall down, in stupid admiration, before the bloody wheels of the conqueror—even of the conqueror by accident—in this, our People rise, with one accord, to pay their homage to intellect and virtue! What a cheering pledge does it give of the stability of our institutions, that while abroad, the yet benighted multitude are prostrating themselves before the idols which their own hands have fashioned into Kings, here, in this land of the free, our People are every where starting up, with one impulse, to follow with their acclamations the ascending spirits of the great Fathers of the Republic! This is a spectacle of which we may be permitted to be proud. It honors our country no less than the illustrious dead. And could those great Patriots speak to us from the tomb, they would tell us that they have more pleasure in the testimony which these honors bear to the character of their country, than in that which they bear to their individual services. They now see as they were seen, while in the body, and know the nature of the feeling from which these honors flow. It is love for love. It is the gratitude of an enlightened nation to the noblest order of benefactors. It is the only glory worth the aspiration of a generous spirit. Who would not prefer this living tomb in the hearts of his countrymen, to the proudest mausoleum that the Genius of Sculpture could erect!

Man has been said to be the creature of accidental position. The cast of his character has been thought to depend, materially, on the age, the country, and the circumstances, in which he has lived. To a considerable extent, the remark is, no doubt, true. Cromwell, had he been born in a Republic, might have been "guiltless of his country's blood;" and, but for those civil commotions which had wrought his great mind into tempest, even Milton might have rested "mute and inglorious." The occasion is, doubtless, necessa-

ry to develop the talent, whatsoever it may be; but the talent must exist, in embryo at least, or no occasion can quicken it into life. And it must exist, too, under the check of strong virtues; or the same occasion that quickens it into life, will be extremely apt to urge it on to crime. The hero who finished his career at St. Helena, extraordinary as he was, is a far more common character in the history of the world, than he who sleeps in our neighborhood, embalmed in his country's tears—or than those whom we have now met to mourn and to honor.

Jefferson and Adams were great men by nature. Not great and eccentric minds “shot madly from their spheres” to affright the world and scatter pestilence in their course; but minds whose strong and steady light, restrained within their proper orbits by the happy poise of their characters, came to cheer and to gladden a world that had been buried for ages in political night. They were heaven-called avengers of degraded man. They came to lift him to the station for which God had formed him, and to put to flight those idiot superstitions with which tyrants had contrived to inthral his reason and his liberty. And that Being who had sent them upon this mission, had fitted them, pre-eminently, for his glorious work. He filled their hearts with a love of country which burned strong within them, even in death. He gave them a power of understanding which no sophistry could baffle, no art elude; and a moral heroism which no dangers could appal. Careless of themselves, reckless of all personal consequences, trampling under foot that petty ambition of office and honor which constitutes the master passion of little minds, they bent all their mighty powers to the task for which they had been delegated—the freedom of their beloved country, and the restoration of fallen man. They felt that they were Apostles of human liberty; and well did they fulfil their high commission. They rested not until they had accomplished their work at home, and given such an impulse to the great ocean of mind, that they saw the

waves rolling on to the farthest shore, before they were called to their reward. And then left the world, hand in hand, exulting, as they rose, in the success of their labors.

From this glance at the consummation of their lives, it falls within the purpose that has drawn us together, to look back at the incidents by which these great men were prepared and led on to their destiny. The field is wide and tempting; and, in this rich field, there is a double harvest to be gathered. But the occasion is limited in point of time. With all the brevity, therefore, compatible with the subject, let us proceed to recall the more prominent incidents, leaving to their biographers those which we must reluctantly omit. And let me hope that the recapitulation, however devoid of interest in itself, will be endured, if not enjoyed, for the sake of those to whom it relates. The review will unavoidably carry us back to scenes of no pleasant nature, which once occurred between our country and a foreign nation with which we now maintain the happiest relations of peace and amity; towards which, at this day, we cherish no other feelings than those of the sincerest respect and good will; and with whose national glory, indeed, as the land of our forefathers, we feel ourselves, in a great measure, identified. If, therefore, there should be any one within the sound of my voice, to whom the language of this retrospect might otherwise seem harsh,* I trust it will be borne in mind that we are Americans, assembled on a purely American occasion, and that we are speaking of things as they were, not as they are: for, in the language of one of our departed fathers, "though enemies in war, in peace we are friends."

The hand of Heaven was kindly manifested even in the place of birth assigned to our departed fathers. Their lots were cast in two distant States, forming links in the same extended chain of colonies. The one, to borrow the language of Isaiah, was called

* The British Minister was present.

“from the North” and “the rising of the sun;” the other, from the South, where he shows his glory in the meridian. The colonies, though held together by their allegiance to a common crown, had separate local governments, separate local interests, and a strikingly contrasted cast of character. The intercourse between them had been rare; the sympathies consequently weak; and these sympathies still further weakened by certain rivalries, prejudices, and jealousies, the result of their mutual ignorance of each other, which were extremely unpropitious to that concerted action on which the success of the great work of Independence rested. To effect this work, it was necessary that men should arise in the different quarters of the continent, with a reach of mind sufficiently extended to look over and beyond this field of prejudice, and mark the great point in which the interest of the whole united; and, with this reach of mind, that they should combine a moral power of sufficient force to make even the discordant materials around them harmoniously subservient to the great end to be accomplished. It pleased Heaven to give us such men, and so to plant them on the theatre of action, as to ensure the concert that the occasion demanded. And in that constellation of the great and the good, rose the two stars of first magnitude to which our attention is now to be confined.

Adams and Jefferson were born, the first in Massachusetts, on the 19th of October, 1735; the last in Virginia, on the 2d of April, 1743. On the earliest opening of their characters, it was manifest that they were marked for distinction. They both displayed that thirst for knowledge, that restless spirit of inquiry, that fervid sensibility, and that bold, fearless independence of thought, which are among the surest prognostics of exalted talent; and, fortunately for them, as well as for their country and mankind, the Universities in their respective neighborhoods opened to their use, all the fountains of ancient and modern learning. With what appetite they drank at these fountains, we need no

testimony of witnesses, to inform us. The living streams which afterwards flowed from their own lips and pens, are the best witnesses that can be called, of their youthful studies. They were, indeed, of that gifted order of minds, to which early instruction is of little other use than to inform them of their own powers, and to indicate the objects of human knowledge. Education was not with them, as with minor characters, an attempt to plant new talents and new qualities in a strange and reluctant soil. It was the development, merely, of those which already existed. Thus, the pure and disinterested patriotism of Aristides, the firmness of Cato, and the devotion of Curtius, only awakened the principles that were sleeping in their young hearts, and touched the responding chords with which Heaven had attuned them. The statesman-like vigor of Pericles, and the spirit-stirring energy of Demosthenes, only roused their own lion powers, and informed them of their strength. Aristotle, and Bacon, and Sidney, and Locke, could do little more than to disclose to them their native capacity for the profound investigation and ascertainment of truth; and Newton taught their power to range among the stars. In short, every model to which they looked, and every great master to whom they appealed, only moved into life the scarcely dormant energies with which Heaven had endued them; and they came forth from the discipline, not decorated for pomp, but armed for battle.

From this first coincidence in the character of their minds and studies, let us proceed to another. They both turned their attention to the same profession, the profession of the law; and they both took up the study of this profession on the same enlarged scale which was so conspicuous in all their other intellectual operations. They had been taught by Hooker to look with reverence upon the science of the law: for, he had told them that "her seat was the bosom of God, her voice the harmony of the world." Pursued in the spirit, on the extended plan, and with the noble aim, with which they pursued it, may it not be said, without

the hazard of illiberal construction, that there was no profession in this country to which Heaven could have directed their choice, so well fitted to prepare them for the eventful struggle which was coming on.

Mr. Adams, we are told, commenced his legal studies, and passed through the initiatory course, under William Putnam of Worcester: but, the crown of preparation was placed on his head by Jeremiah Gridley.* Gridley was a man of first rate learning and vigor, and as good a judge of character as he was of law. He had been the legal preceptor, also, some years before, of the celebrated James Otis; and, proud of his two pupils, he was wont to say of them at the bar, with playful affection, that "he had raised two young eagles who were one day or other to peck out his eyes."† The two young eagles were never known to treat their professional father with irreverence; but how well they fulfilled his prediction of their future eminence, has been already well told by the elegant biographer of one, and remains to furnish a rich theme for that of the other.

It was in the commencement of his legal studies, and when he was yet but a boy, that Mr. Adams wrote that letter from Worcester which has been recently given to the world. Considering the age of the writer, and the point of time at which it was written, that letter may be pronounced, without hyperbole, a mental phenomenon, and far better entitled to the character of a prophecy, than the celebrated passage from the *Medea* of Seneca, which Bacon has quoted as a prophecy of the discovery of America.

Before I call your attention more particularly to this letter, it is proper to remark, that Mr. Adams lived at a time and among men, well fitted to evoke his youthful powers. Massachusetts had been, from its earliest

* Mr. Samuel L. Knapp's Address on the Death of Adams and Jefferson.

† Mr. Knapp's Life of Gridley.

VOL. V.

- settlement, a theatre of almost constant political contention. The spirit of liberty, which had prompted the pilgrims to bid adieu to the land and tombs of their fathers, and to brave the horrors of an exile to the wilds of America, accompanied them to the forests which they came to subdue; and questions of political right and power, between the parent country and the colony, were continually arising, to call that spirit into action, and to keep it bright and strong. These were a peculiar People, a stern and hardy race, the children of the storm; inured from the cradle to the most frightful hardships which they came to regard as their daily pastime, their minds, as well as their bodies, gathered new strength from the fearful elements that were warring around them, and whatever they dared to meditate as right, that they dared and never failed to accomplish. The robust character of the fathers descended upon their children, and with it, also, came the same invigorating contests. Violations of their charters, unconstitutional restraints upon their trade, and perpetual collisions with the royal Governors sent over to bend or to break them, had converted that province into an arena, in which the strength of mind had been tried against mind, for a century, before the tug of the Revolution came. And these were no puerile sports. They were the stern struggle of intellectual force, for power on the one hand, and liberty on the other. And from that discipline there came forth such men as such a struggle only seems capable of generating; rough, and strong, and bold, and daring; meeting their adversaries, foot to foot, on the field of argument, and beating them off that field by the superior vigor of their blows.

*Præcipitemque Daren, ardens agit æquore toto :
Nunc dextra ingeminans ictus, nunc ille sinistra,
Nec mora, nec requies.*

From this school issued those men so well formed for the sturdy business of life, and who shine so brightly

in the annals of Massachusetts—Mayhew and Hawley and Thacher, and Otis, and Hancock, and a host of others, of the same strong stamp of character: men as stout of heart as of mind, and breathing around them an atmosphere of patriotic energy, which it was impossible to inhale without partaking of their spirit.

Such was the atmosphere which it was the fortune of John Adams to breathe, even from his infancy. Such were the high examples before him. From this proud eyry it was, that this young eagle first opened his eyes upon the sun and the ocean, and learned to plume his own wings for the daring flight.

His letter from Worcester bears date on the 12th of October, 1755. He was consequently then only in his twentieth year. At that time, remember, that no thought of a separation from the parent country had ever touched these shores. The conversations to which he alludes, were upon the topics of the day, and went no farther than to a discussion of the rights of the colony, considered as a colony of the British empire. These were the hints which set his young mind in motion, and this is the letter which they produced:

“ WORCESTER, October 12, 1755.

“Soon after the Reformation, a few people came over into this New World for conscience' sake. Perhaps this apparently trivial incident may transfer the great seat of empire into America. It looks likely to me, if we can remove the turbulent Gallicks, our people, according to the exactest computations, will, in another century, become more numerous than England herself. Should this be the case, since we have, I may say, all the naval stores of the nation in our hands, it will be easy to obtain the mastery of the seas; and then the united force of all Europe will not be able to subdue us. [Here we see the first germ of the American Navy.] The only way to keep us from setting up for ourselves, is to disunite us. *Divide et impera.* Keep us in distinct colonies, and then some great men in each colony, desiring the monarchy of

the whole, they will destroy each other's influence, and keep the country *in equilibrio*. Be not surprised that I am turned politician; the whole town is immersed in politics. The interests of nations, and all the *dira* of war, make the subject of every conversation. I sit and hear, and, after having been led through a maze of sage observations, I sometimes retire, and, by laying things together, form some reflections pleasing to myself. The produce of one of these reveries you have read above."

Here we mark the political dawn of the mind of this great man. His country, her resources, her independence, her glory, were the *first objects of his* thoughts, as they were the last. *Here, too, we see the earliest proof of that bold and adventurous turn for speculation, that sagacious flashing into futurity, and that sanguine anticipation, which became so conspicuous in his after life.* He calls this letter a reverie; but, connecting it with his ardent character and his future career, there is reason to believe, that it was a reverie which produced in him all the effect of a prophetic vision, and opened to him a perspective which was never afterwards closed.

An incident soon occurred to give brighter tinting and stronger consistency to this dream of his youth; and this may be considered as among the most efficient of those means, devised by the wisdom of Providence, to shape the character and point the energies of this high-minded young man to the advancement of the great destiny that awaited his country. The famous question of writs of assistance was argued, in his presence, in Boston, in February, 1761. These writs were a kind of general search-warrants, transferrable by manual delivery from one low tool of power to another, and without any return; which put at the mercy of these vulgar wretches, for an indefinite period, the domestic privacy, the peace and comfort, of the most respectable inhabitants in the colony; and even the sanctuary of female delicacy and devotion. The authority of the British tribunals in the

province, themselves the instruments of a tyrant's will, to issue such writs, was the precise question to be discussed. The champion in opposition to the power was the great Otis. Of the character of his argument, and its effect upon Mr. Adams, we are not left to conjecture: he has given it to us, himself, in his own burning phraseology. "Otis was a flame of fire! With a promptitude of classical allusion, a depth of research, a rapid summary of historical events and dates, a profusion of legal authorities, a prophetic glance of his eyes into futurity, and a rapid torrent of impetuous eloquence, he hurried away all before him. American Independence was then and there born." And he adds—"Every man of an immense crowded audience appeared to me to go away, as I did, ready to take arms against writs of assistance."

The "immense crowded audience," it is probable, left the hall with no impressions beyond the particular subject of debate. They were ready to take arms against writs of assistance. Not so with Mr. Adams. In him the "splendid conflagration of Otis" had set fire to a mind whose action it was not easy to restrain within narrow limits; a mind already looking out on the wide expanse of the future, and apparently waiting only for the occasion, to hold up to his countrymen the great revolving light of Independence, above the darkness of the coming storm. In him American Independence was then and there born: and, appealing to his own bosom, he was justified in saying, as he has done, on another occasion, in the most solemn terms, "that James Otis, then and there, first breathed into this nation the breath of life."

The flame thus given to his enthusiasm was never permitted to subside. The breach between the two countries grew wider and wider, until, from being an excited spectator, he soon became a vigorous and most efficient actor. In his thirtieth year, he gave to his country, that powerful work, "The Dissertation on the Canon and Feudal Law." It is but to read those extracts from this work which have been recently diffus-

ed among us from the North, to see that it was not limited in its purpose to the specific questions which had then arisen. The discussion travels far beyond these questions, and bears all the marks of a profound and comprehensive design, to prepare the country for a separation from Great Britain. It is a review of the whole system of the British institutions, and a most powerful assault upon those heresies, civil and religious, which constituted the outposts of that system. Besides the solid instruction which it conveys on the true theory of government, and the deep and impressive exhortation with which it urges the necessity of correct information to the People, it seems to have been the leading object of the work to disenchant his countrymen of that reverence for the institutions of the parent country which still lingered around their hearts, and to teach them to look upon these institutions, not only with indifference, but with aversion and contempt. Hence those burning sarcasms which he flings into every story of the citadel, until the whole edifice is wrapped in flames. It is, indeed, a work eminently fitted for the speedy regeneration of the country. The whole tone of the essay is so raised and bold, that it sounds like a trumpet-call to arms. And the haughty defiance which he hurls into the face of the oppressors of his country, is so brave and uncompromising, as to leave no doubt that, whatever might be the temper of the rest of the community, the author had already laid his hand upon the altar, and sworn that his country should be free.

All this fire, however, was tempered with judgment, and guided by the keenest and most discriminating sagacity; and if his character was marked by the stubborn firmness of the Pilgrim, it was because he was supported by the Pilgrims' conscious integrity. Another incident soon occurred to place these qualities in high relief. In the progress of the quarrel, Great Britain had quartered an army in Boston, to supply the place of argument, and enforce that submission which she could not command. The immediate con-

sequence was collision and affray between the soldiery and the citizens; and, in one of those affrays, on the 5th of March, 1770, the British captain, Preston, gave the fatal order to fire! Several were killed, and many more were wounded. It is easy to imagine the storm that instantly arose. The infuriated populace were, with great difficulty, restrained by the leading men of the town, from sating their vengeance upon the spot. Disappointed of this, they were loud, and even frantic, in their cry for the vengeance of law. Yet there was no murder in the case: for, in this instance it had happened that they were themselves the assailants. Preston was arrested for trial: and Mr. Adams then standing in the van of the profession; as well as that of the patriots, was called upon to undertake his defence. How was he to act? It is easy to know how a little, time-serving politician, or even a man of ordinary firmness, would have acted: the one would have thrown himself on the popular current, and the other would have been swept along by it, and joined in the public cry for the victim. But Adams belonged to a higher order of character. He was formed not only to impel and guide the torrent; but to head that torrent too, when it had taken a wrong direction, and "to roll it back upon its source." He was determined that the world should distinguish between a petty commotion of angry spirits, and the noble stand made by an enlightened nation in a just and noble cause. He was resolved that that pure and elevated cause should not be soiled and debased by an act of individual injustice. He undertook the defence, supported by his younger, but distinguished associate, Josiah Quincy; and, far from flattering the angry passions around him, he called upon the jury, in their presence, "to be deaf, deaf as adders, to the clamors of the populace;" and they were so. To their honor, a jury drawn from the excited people of Boston, acquitted the prisoner: and to their equal honor, that very populace, instead of representing the language and conduct of his advocate, loaded him immediately with additional proofs of their

confidence. These were the people, who, according to some European notions, are incapable of any agency in their own government. By their systems, deliberately planned for the purpose, they first degrade and brutalize their people, and then descant on their unfitness for self-rule. The man of America, it seems, is the only man fit for republican government! But man is every where the same, and requires only to be enlightened, to assert the native dignity of his character.

Mr. Adams was now among the most conspicuous champions of the colonial cause in Massachusetts. In the same year to which we have just adverted, 1770, he had been elected a member of the Provincial Legislature; and he thenceforth took a high and commanding part in every public measure; displaying, on every occasion, the same consistent character; the same sagacity to pierce the night of the future; the same bold and dauntless front; the same nerve of the Nemean lion.

The time had now come for concerted action among the Colonies: and, accordingly, on the 5th September, 1774, the first Continental Congress met at Philadelphia. With what emotions Mr. Adams witnessed this great movement of the nation, it is easy for those who know his ardent character to imagine. Nor, are we left to our imaginations alone. He had been elected a member of that body; and immediately on his election, an incident occurred which relieves us from the necessity of conjecturing the state of his feelings. His friend Sewall, the Attorney General, hearing of his election, sent for him, and he came: when Sewall, with all the solicitude and importunity of friendship, sought to divert him from his purpose from taking his seat in Congress: he represented to him that Great Britain was determined on her purpose: that her power was irresistible, and would be destructive to him and all who should persevere in opposition to her designs. "I know," replied the dauntless and high-souled patriot, "that Great Britain has determined on her system;

and that very determination, determines me on mine. You know that I have been constant and uniform in opposition to her designs. The die is ~~now~~ cast. I have passed the Rubicon. Sink or swim, live or die, survive or perish with my country, is my unalterable determination." He accordingly took his seat: and with what activity and effect he discharged its duties, the journals of the day sufficiently attest.

Of that august and venerable body, the old Continental Congress, what can be said that would not fall below the occasion? What that would not sound like a puerile and tumid effort, to exaggerate the praise of a body which was above all praise? Let me turn from any attempt at description to your own hearts, where that body lies entombed with all you hold most sacred. To that Congress, let future statesmen look, and learn what it is to be a patriot. There was no self. No petty intrigue for power. No despicable faction for individual honors. None of those feuds, the fruit of an unhallowed ambition, which converted the Revolution of France into a mere contest for the command of the guillotine; and which have, now, nearly disarmed unhappy Greece, in the sacred war she is waging for the tombs of her illustrious dead. No: of our Great Fathers we may say with truth, what was said of the Romans in their golden age; "with them the Republic was all in all; for that alone they consulted; the only faction they formed was against the common enemy: their minds, their bodies were exerted, sincerely, and greatly and nobly exerted, not for personal power, but for the liberties, the honor, the glory of their country." May the time never come, when an allusion to their virtues can give any other feelings than those of pleasure and pride to their descendants.

Having, in this imperfect manner, fellow-citizens, touched rather than traced the incidents by which Mr. Adams was prepared and conducted into the scenes of the Revolution, let us turn to the great luminary of the South.

Virginia, as you know, had been settled by other

causes than those which had peopled Massachusetts; and the Colonists themselves were of a different character. The first attempts at settlement in that quarter of the world had been conducted, as you remember, under the auspices of the gallant Raleigh, that "man of wit and man of the sword," as Sir Edward Coke tauntingly called him, and certainly one of the brightest flowers in the Courts of Elizabeth and James. He did not live to make a permanent establishment in Virginia; but, his genius seems, nevertheless, to have presided over the State, and to have stamped his own character on her distinguished sons. Virginia had experienced none of those early and long continued conflicts which had contributed to form the robust character of the North; on the contrary, during the century that Massachusetts had been buffeting with the storm, Virginia, resting on a halcyon sea, had been cultivating the graces of science, and literature, and the genial elegancies of social life. But, her moral and intellectual character was not less firm and vigorous than that of her Northern sister: for the invader came, and Athens as well as Sparta, was found ready to do her duty, and to do it too, bravely, ably, heroically.

At the time of Mr. Jefferson's appearance, the society of Virginia was much diversified, and reflected, pretty distinctly, an image of that of England. There was, first, the landed aristocracy, shadowing forth the order of English nobility: then, the sturdy yeomanry, common to them both; and last, a *feculum* of beings, as they were called by Mr. Jefferson, corresponding with the mass of the English plebeians.

Mr. Jefferson, by birth, belonged to the aristocracy; but, the idle and voluptuous life which marked that order had no charms for a mind like his. He relished better the strong, unsophisticated, and racy character of the yeomanry, and attached himself of choice, to that body. Born to an inheritance, then deemed immense, and with a decided taste for literature and science, it would not have been surprising if he had de-

voted himself, exclusively, to the luxury of his studies, and left the toils and the hazards of public action to others. But, he was naturally ardent, and fond of action, and of action too, on a great scale; and, so readily did he kindle in the feelings that were playing around him, that he could no more have stood still while his country was agitated, than the war-horse can sleep under the sound of the trumpet.

He was a republican and a philanthropist from the earliest dawn of his character. He read with a sort of poetic illusion, which identified him with every scene that his author spread before him. Enraptured with the brighter ages of republican Greece and Rome, he had followed, with an aching heart, the march of history which had told him of the desolation of those fairest portions of the earth; and had seen, with dismay and indignation, that swarm of monarchies, the progeny of the Scandinavian hive, under which genius and liberty were now, every where crushed. He loved his own country with a passion not less intense, deep and holy, than that of his great compatriot; and with this love, he combined an expanded philanthropy which encircled the globe. From the working of the strong energies within him, there arose an early vision, too, which cheered his youth and accompanied him through life—the vision of emancipated man throughout the world. Nor was this a dream of the morning that passed away and was forgotten. On the contrary, like the Heaven descended banner of Constantine, he hailed it as an omen of certain victory, and girded his loins for the onset, with the omnipotence of truth.

On his early studies we have already touched. The study of the law he pursued under George Wythe; a man of Roman stamp, in Rome's best age. Here he acquired that unrivalled neatness, system and method in business, which, through all his future life, and in every office that he filled, gave him, in effect, the hundred hands of Briareus; here, too, following the giant steps of his master, he travelled the whole round of the civil and common law. From the same example,

he caught that untiring spirit of investigation which never left a subject till he had searched it to the bottom, and of which we have so noble a specimen in his correspondence with Mr. Hammond, on the subject of British debts. In short, Mr. Wythe performed for him, what Jeremiah Gridley had done for Mr. Adams; he placed on his head the crown of legal preparation: and well did it become him. Permit me, here, to correct an error which seems to have prevailed. It has been thought that Mr. Jefferson made no figure at the bar: but the case was far otherwise. There are still extant, in his own fair and neat hand, in the manner of his master, a number of arguments which were delivered by him at the bar, upon some of the most intricate questions of the law: which, if they shall ever see the light, will vindicate his claim to the first honors of the profession. It is true he was not distinguished in popular debate; why he was not so, has often been matter of surprise to those who have seen his eloquence on paper, and heard it in conversation. He had all the attributes of the mind, and the heart, and the soul, which are essential to eloquence of the highest order. The only defect was a physical one; he wanted volume and compass of voice for a large deliberative assembly; and his voice, from the excess of his sensibility, instead of rising with his feelings and conceptions, sunk under their pressure, and became guttural and inarticulate. The consciousness of this infirmity repressed any attempt in a large body, in which he knew he must fail. But his voice was all sufficient for the purposes of judicial debate; and there is no reason to doubt that, if the service of his country had not called him away so soon from his profession, his fame as a lawyer, would now have stood upon the same distinguished ground which he confessedly occupies as a statesman, an author, and a scholar.

It was not until 1764, when the Parliament of Great Britain passed its resolutions preparatory to the stamp act, that Virginia seems to have been thoroughly startled from her repose. Her Legislature was then in ses-

sion; and her patriots, taking the alarm, remonstrated promptly and firmly against this assumed power. The remonstrance, however, was, as usual, disregarded, and the stamp act came. But it came to meet, on the floor of the House, an unlooked-for champion, whom Heaven had just raised up for the good of his country and of mankind. I speak of that untutored child of nature, Patrick Henry, who had now, for the first time, left his native forests to show the metal of which he was made, and "give the world assurance of a man."

The Assembly met in the city of Williamsburg, where Mr. Jefferson was still pursuing the study of the law. Mr. Henry's celebrated resolutions against the stamp act were introduced in May, 1765. How they were resisted, and how maintained, has been already stated to the world, in terms that have been pronounced extravagant, by those who modestly consider themselves as furnishing a fair standard of Revolutionary excellence. The coldest glow-worm in the hedge, is about as fair a standard of the power of the sun. To the present purpose, it is only necessary to remark, that Mr. Jefferson was present at this debate, and has left us an account of it, in his own words. He was then, he says, but a student, and stood in the door of communication between the House and the lobby, where he heard the whole of this magnificent debate. The opposition to the last resolution was most vehement; the debate upon it, to use his own strong language, "most bloody;" but, he adds, torrents of sublime eloquence from Henry, backed by the solid reasoning of Johnson, prevailed; and the resolution was carried by a single vote. I well remember, he continues, the cry of "treason," by the Speaker, echoed from every part of the House, against Mr. Henry: I well remember his pause, and the admirable address with which he recovered himself, and baffled the charge thus vociferated.

He here alludes, as you must perceive, to that memorable exclamation of Mr. Henry, now become al-

most too familiar for quotation: "Cæsar had his Brutus, Charles the First his Cromwell, and George the Third—"Treason!" cried the Speaker. "Treason! treason!" echoed the House;)—may profit by their example. If this be treason, make the most of it."

While I am presenting to you this picture of Mr. Jefferson in his youth, listening to the almost super-human eloquence of Henry on the great subject which formed the hinge of the American Revolution, are you not forcibly reminded of the parallel scene which had passed only four years before, in the Hall of Justice in Boston: Mr. Adams catching from Otis, "the breath of life?" How close the parallel, and how interesting the incident! Who can think of these two young men, destined themselves to make so great a figure in the future history of their country, thus lighting the fires of their own genius at the altars of Henry and of Otis, without being reminded of another picture, which has been exhibited to us by a historian of Rome: The younger Scipio Africanus, then in his military noviciate, standing a youthful spectator on a hill near Carthage, and looking down upon the battle-field on which those veteran generals, Hamilcar and Massanissa, were driving, with so much glory, the car of war! Whether Otis or Henry first breathed into this nation the breath of life, (a question merely for curious and friendly speculation,) it is very certain that they breathed into their two young hearers, that breath which has made them both immortal.

From this day forth, Mr. Jefferson, young as he was, stood forward as a champion for his country. It was now, in the fire of his youth, that he adopted those mottos for his seals, so well remembered in Virginia: "*Ab eo libertas, a quo spiritus*," and "Resistance to tyrants is obedience to God." He joined the band of the brave who were for the boldest measures: and by the light, the contagious spirit and vigor of his conversation, as well as by his enchanting and powerful pen, he contributed eminently to lift Virginia to that height

which placed her by the side of her Northern sister. It is a historical fact well known to us all, that these two great States, then by far the most populous and powerful in the Union, led off, as it was natural and fit that they should do, all the strong measures that ended in the Declaration of Independence. Together, and stroke for stroke, they breasted the angry surge, and threw it aside "with hearts of controversy," until they reached that shore from which we now look back with so much pride and triumph.

It was in his thirtieth year, as you remember, that Mr. Adams gave to the world his first great work, the Dissertation on the Canon and Feudal Law; and it was, about the same period of his life, that Mr. Jefferson produced his first great political work, "A Summary View of the Rights of British America." The history of this work is somewhat curious and interesting, and I give it to you on the authority of Mr. Jefferson himself. He had been elected a member of that State Convention of Virginia which, in August, 1774, appointed the first Delegates to the Continental Congress. Arrested by sickness on his way to Williamsburg, he sent forward, to be laid on the table, a draught of instructions to the Delegates whom Virginia should send. This was read by the members, and they published it, under the title of "A Summary View of the Rights of British America." A copy of this work having found its way to England, it received from the pen of the celebrated Burke such alterations as adapted it to the purposes of the opposition there, and it there re-appeared in a new edition; an honor which, as Mr. Jefferson afterwards learned, occasioned the insertion of his name in a bill of attainder, which, however, never saw the light. So far Mr. Jefferson. Let me add, that the old inhabitants of Williamsburg, a few years back, well remembered the effect of that work on Lord Dunmore, then the royal Governor of the State. His fury broke out in the most indecent and unmitigated language. Mr. Jefferson's name was marked high on his list of proscription, and the victim

was only reprieved until the rebellion should be crushed; but that rebellion became revolution, and the high priest of the meditated sacrifice was sent to howl his disappointment to the hills and winds of his native Scotland.

In the next year, 1775, Mr. Jefferson, young as he was, was singled out by the Virginia Legislature, to answer Lord North's famous "conciliatory proposition," called, in the language of the day, his "olive branch." But it was an olive branch that hid the guileful serpent, or, in the language of Mr. Adams, "it was an asp in a basket of flowers." The answer stands upon the records of the country. Cool, calm, close, full of compressed energy and keen sagacity; while, at the same time it preserves the most perfect decorum, it is one of the most nervous and manly productions even of that age of men.

The second Congress met on the 10th of May, 1775. Mr. Adams was, of course, again a member. Mr. Jefferson having been deputed, contingently, (to supply the place of Peyton Randolph,) did not take his seat at the commencement of the session. Of the political works of this Congress, as well as of the preceding, their petitions, memorials, remonstrances, to the Throne, to the Parliament, to the People of England, of Ireland, and of Canada, I have forborne to speak, because they are familiar to you all. Let it suffice to say, that, in the estimation of so great a judge as Lord Chatham, they were such as had never been surpassed even in the master States of the world, in ancient Greece and Rome; and although they produced no good effect on the unhappy monarch of Britain; though Pharaoh's heart was hardened so that they moved not him, they moved all heaven and all earth besides, and opened a passage for our fathers through the great deep.

The plot of the awful drama now began to thicken. The sword had been drawn. The battles of Lexington and Concord had been fought; and Warren, the rose of American chivalry, had been cut down, in his

bloom, on that hill which his death has hallowed. The blood which had been shed in Massachusetts cried from the ground, in every quarter of the Union. Congress heard that cry, and resolved on war. Troops were ordered to be raised. A Commander-in-Chief came to be appointed, and General Ward, of Massachusetts, was put in nomination. Here we have an incident in the life of Mr. Adams most strikingly characteristic of the man. Giving to the winds all local prepossessions, and looking only to the cause that filled his soul, the cause of his country, he prompted and sustained the nomination of that patriot hero whom the Almighty, in his goodness, had formed for the occasion. Washington was elected, and the choice was ratified in Heaven. He accepted his commission on the very day on which the soul of Warren winged its flight from Bunker Hill, and well did he avenge the death of that youthful hero.

Five days after General Washington's appointment, Mr. Jefferson, for the first time, took his seat as a member of Congress; and here, for the first time, met the two illustrious men whom we are endeavoring to commemorate. They met, and at once became friends—to part no more, but for a short season, and then to be re-united, both for time and eternity.

There was now open war between Great Britain and her colonies. Yet the latter looked no farther than resistance to the specific power of the parent country to tax them at pleasure. A dissolution of the union had not yet been contemplated, either by Congress or the nation; and many of those who had voted for the war, would have voted, and did afterwards vote, against that dissolution.

Such was the state of things under which the Congress of 1776 assembled, when Adams and Jefferson again met. It was, as you know, in this Congress, that the question of American Independence came, for the first time, to be discussed; and never, certainly, has a more momentous question been discussed, in any age or in any country; for, it was fraught, not only with the

destinies of this wide extended continent, but, as the event has shown, and is still showing, with the destinies of man, all over the world.

How fearful that question then was, no one can tell but those who forgetting all that has since past, can transport themselves back to the time, and plant their feet on the ground which those patriots then occupied. "Shadows, clouds, and darkness" then covered all the future, and the present was full only of danger and terror. A more unequal contest never was proposed. It was, indeed, as it was then said to be, the shepherd boy of Israel going forth to battle against the giant of Gath; and there were yet among us, enough to tremble when they heard that giant say, "Come to me, and I will give thy flesh to the fowls of the air and the beasts of the field." But, there were those who never trembled—who knew that there was a God in Israel, and who were willing to commit their cause "to his even-handed justice," and his almighty power. That their great trust was in Him, is manifest from the remarks that were continually breaking from the lips of the patriots. Thus, the patriot Hawley, when pressed upon the inequality of the contest, could only answer, "We must put to sea—Providence will bring us into port;" and Patrick Henry, when urged upon the same topic, exclaimed, 'True, true; but there is a God above, who rules and over-rules the destinies of nations."

Amid this appalling array that surrounded them, the first to enter the breach, sword in hand, was John Adams—the vision of his youth at his heart, and his country in every nerve. On the sixth of May, he offered, in committee of the whole, the significant resolution, that the colonies should form governments independent of the crown. This was the harbinger of more important measures, and seems to have been put forward to feel the pulse of the House. The resolution, after a bloody struggle, was adopted on the 15th day of May following. On the 7th of June, by previous concert, Richard Henry Lee moved the great re-

resolution of Independence, and was seconded by John Adams; and "then came the tug of war." The debate upon it was continued from the 7th to the 10th, when the further consideration of it was postponed to the 1st of July, and at the same time a committee of five was appointed to prepare, provisionally, a draught of a Declaration of Independence. At the head of this important committee, which was then appointed by vote of the House, although he was probably the youngest member, and one of the youngest men in the House, (for he had served only part of the former session, and was but thirty-two years of age,) stands the name of Thomas Jefferson—Mr. Adams stands next. And these two gentlemen having been deputed a sub-committee to prepare the draught, that draught, at Mr. Adams' earnest importunity, was prepared by his more youthful friend. Of this transaction Mr. Adams is himself the historian, and the authorship of the Declaration, though once disputed, is thus placed forever beyond the reach of question.

The final debate on the resolution was postponed, as we have seen, for nearly a month. In the mean time, all who are conversant with the course of action of all deliberative bodies, know how much is done by conversation among the members. It is not often, indeed, that proselytes are made on great questions by public debate. On such questions, opinions are far more frequently formed in private, and so formed that debate is seldom known to change them. Hence the value of the out-of-door talent of chamber consultation, where objections candidly stated are candidly, calmly, and mildly discussed; where neither pride, nor shame, nor anger take part in the discussion, nor stand in the way of a correct conclusion; but where every thing being conducted frankly, delicately, respectfully, and kindly, the better cause and the better reasoner are almost always sure of success. In this kind of service, as well as in all that depended on the power of composition, Mr. Jefferson was as much a master-magician, as his eloquent friend Adams was in

debate. They were, in truth, hemispheres of the same golden globe, and required only to be brought and put together, to prove that they were parts of the same heaven-formed whole.

On the present occasion, however, much still remained to be effected by debate. The first of July came, and the great debate on the resolution for independence was resumed, with fresh spirit. The discussion was again protracted for two days, which, in addition to the former three, were sufficient, in that age, to call out all the speaking talent of the House. Botta, the Italian historian of our Revolution, has made Mr. Dickinson and Mr. Lee the principal speakers on the opposite sides of this question; and availing himself of that dramatic license of ancient historians, which the fidelity of modern history has exploded, he has drawn, from his own fancy, two orations, which he has put into the mouths of those distinguished men. With no disposition to touch, with a hostile hand, one leaf of the well-earned laurels of Mr. Lee, (which every American would feel far more pleasure in contributing to brighten and to cherish,) and with no feelings but those of reverence and gratitude for the memory of the other great patriots who assisted in that debate, may we not say, and are we not bound in justice to say, that Botta is mistaken in the relative prominence of one, at least, of his prolocutors? Mr. Jefferson has told us that "the Colossus of that Congress—the great pillar of support to the Declaration of Independence, and its ablest advocate and champion on the floor of the House, was John Adams." How he supported it, can now be only matter of imagination: for, the debate was conducted with closed doors, and there was no reporter on the floor to catch the strains living as they rose. I will not attempt what Mr. Adams himself, if he were alive, could not accomplish. He might recall the topics of argument: but with regard to those flashes of inspiration, those bursts of passion, which grew out of the awful feelings of the moment, they are gone forever, with the reality of the occasion:

and the happiest effort of fancy to supply their place, (by me, at least,) would bear no better resemblance to the original, than the petty crepitations of an artificial volcano, to the sublime explosions of thundering *Ætna*. Waiving, therefore, the example of Botta, let it suffice for us to know, that in that moment of darkness, of terror, and of consternation, when the election was to be made between an attempt at liberty and independence on the one hand, and defeat, subjugation, and death, on the other, the courage of Adams, in the true spirit of heroism, rose in proportion to the dangers that pressed around him; and that he poured forth that only genuine eloquence, the eloquence of the soul, which, in the language of Mr. Jefferson, "moved his hearers from their seats." The objections of his adversaries were seen no longer but in a state of wreck; floating, in broken fragments, on the billows of the storm: and over rocks, over breakers, and amid ingulphing whirlpools, that every where surrounded him, he brought the gallant ship of the nation safe into port.

It was on the evening of the day on which this great victory was achieved, (before which, in moral grandeur, the trophies of Marengo and the Nile fade away,) and while his mind was yet rolling with the agitation of the recent tempest, that he wrote that letter to the venerable partner of his bosom, which has now become matter of history; in which, after announcing the adoption of the resolution, he foretells the future glories of his country, and the honors with which the returning anniversary of her Declaration of Independence would be hailed, till time should be no more. That which strikes us on the first perusal of this letter, is, the prophetic character with which it is stamped, and the exactness with which its predictions have been fulfilled. But, his biographer will remark in it another character: the deep political calculation of results, through which the mind of the writer, according to its habit, had flashed; and the firm and undoubting confidence

with which, in spite of those appearances that alarmed and misled weaker minds, he looked to the triumphant close of the struggle.

The resolution having been carried, the draught of the Declaration came to be examined in detail; and, so faultless had it issued from the hands of its author, that it was adopted as he had prepared it, pruned only of a few of its brightest inherent beauties, through a prudent deference to some of the States. It was adopted about noon of the Fourth, and proclaimed to an exulting nation, on the evening of the same day.

That brave and animated band who signed it—where are they now? What heart does not sink at the question? One only survives: Charles Carroll, of Carrollton—a noble specimen of the age that has gone by, and now the single object of that age, on whom the veneration and prayers of his country are concentrated. The rest have bequeathed to us the immortal record of their virtue and patriotism, and have ascended to a brighter reward than man can confer.

Of that instrument to which you listen with reverence on every returning anniversary of its adoption, “which forms the ornament of our halls, and the first political lesson of our children,” it is needless to speak. You know that in its origin and object, it was a statement of the causes which had compelled our Fathers to separate themselves from Great Britain, and to declare these States free and independent. It was the voice of the American Nation addressing herself to the other nations of the earth: and the address is, in all respects, worthy of this noble personification. It is the great argument of America in vindication of her course: and as Mr. Adams had been the Colossus of the cause on the floor of Congress, his illustrious friend, the author of this instrument, may well be pronounced to have been its Colossus on the theatre of the World.

The decisive step, which fixed the destiny of the na-

tion, had now been taken : and that step was irrevocable. "The die was now, indeed, cast. The Rubicon had been crossed," effectually, finally, forever. There was no return but to chains, to slavery and death. No such backward step was meditated by the firm hearts that led on the march of the nation : but, confiding in the justice of Heaven, and the final triumph of truth, they moved forward in solid phalanx, and with martial step, regardless of the tempest that was breaking around them.

Their confidence in the favor and protection of Heaven, however, strong and unshaken as it was, did not dispose them to relax their own exertions, nor to neglect the earthly means of securing their triumph. They were not of the number of those who call upon Hercules, and put not their own shoulders to the wheel. Our adversary was one of the most powerful nations on earth. Our whole strength consisted of a few stout hearts and a good cause. But, we were wofully deficient in all the sinews of war : we wanted men, we wanted arms, we wanted money ; and these could be procured only from abroad. But, the intervening ocean was covered with the fleets of the enemy ; and the patriot Laurens, one of their captives, was already a prisoner in the Tower of London. Who was there to undertake this perilous service ? He who was ever ready to peril any service in the cause of his country : John Adams. Congress knew their man, and did not hesitate on the choice. Appointed a Minister to France, he promptly obeyed the sacred call, and, with a brave and fearless heart, he ran the gauntlet through the hostile fleet, and arrived in safety. Passing from Court to Court, he pleaded the cause of his country with all the resistless energy of truth ; and availing himself, adroitly, of the selfish passions and interests of those Courts, he ceased not to ply his efforts, with matchless dexterity, until the objects of his mission were completely attained. With the exception of one short interval of a return home, in 1779, when he aided in giving form to the Constitution of his na-

tive State, he remained abroad, in France, in Holland—wherever he could be most useful—in the strenuous, faithful, and successful service of his country, receiving repeated votes of thanks from Congress, till the storm was over, and peace and liberty came to crown his felicity, and realize the cherished vision of his youth.

Mr. Jefferson, meanwhile, was not less strenuously and successfully engaged at home, in forwarding and confirming the great objects of the Revolution, and making it a revolution of mind, as well as of government. Marking, with that sagacity which distinguished him, the series of inventions by which tyranny had contrived to tutor the mind to subjection, and educate it in habits of servile subordination, he proceeded, in Virginia, with the aid of Pendleton and Wythe, to break off the manacles, one by one, and deliver the imprisoned intellect from this debasing sorcery. The law of entails, that feudal contrivance to foster and nourish a vicious aristocracy at the expense of the community, had, at a previous period, been broken up, on their suggestion; and property was left to circulate freely and impart health and vigor to the operations of society. The law of primogeniture, that other feudal contrivance to create and keep up an artificial inequality among men whom their Creator had made equal, was now repealed, and the parent and his children were restored to their natural religion. And, above all, that daring usurpation on the rights of the Creator, as well as the creature, which presumes to dictate to man what he shall believe, and in what form he shall offer the worship of his heart, and this, too, for the vile purpose of strengthening the hands of a temporal tyrant, by feeding and pampering the tools of his power, was indignantly demolished, and the soul was restored to its free communion with the God who gave it.

The preamble to the bill establishing religious freedom in Virginia, is one of the most morally sublime of human productions. By its great author it was always

esteemed as one of his happiest efforts, and the measure itself one of his best services, as the short and modest epitaph left by him attests. Higher praise cannot and need not be given to it, than to say, it is in all respects worthy of the pen which wrote the Declaration of Independence: that it breathes the same lofty and noble spirit; and is a fit companion for that immortal instrument.

The legislative enactments that have been mentioned, form a small part, only, of an entire revision of the laws of Virginia. The collection of bills passed by these great men, (one hundred and twenty-six in number,) presents a system of jurisprudence, so comprehensive, profound, and beautiful, so perfectly, so happily adapted to the new state of things, that, if its authors had never done any thing else, impartial history would have assigned them a place by the side of Solon and Lycurgus.

In 1779, Mr. Jefferson was called to assume the helm of government in Virginia, in succession to Patrick Henry. He took that helm, at the moment when war, for the first time, had entered the limits of the Commonwealth. With what strength, fidelity, and ability he held it, under the most trying circumstances, the highest testimonials now stand on the journals of Congress, as well as those of Virginia. It is true that a poor attempt was made, in after times, to wound the honor of his administration. But he bore a charmed character; and this, like every other blow that has ever been aimed at it, only recoiled to crush his accuser, and to leave him the brighter and stronger for the assault.

In 1781, his alert and active mind, which watched the rising character of his new-born country, with all the jealous vigilance of an anxious father, found a new occasion to call him into the intellectual field. Our country was yet but imperfectly known in Europe. Its face, its soil, its physical capacities, its animals, and even the men who inhabited it, were so little known,

as to have furnished to philosophers abroad a theme of unfounded and degrading speculation. Those visionaries, dreaming over theories which they wanted the means or the inclination to confront with facts, had advanced, among others, the fantastic notion that even man degenerated by transplantation to America. To refute this insolent position, and to place his country before Europe and the world on the elevated ground she was entitled to hold, the Notes on Virginia were prepared and published. He there pointed to Washington, to Franklin, and to Rittenhouse, as being alone sufficient to exterminate this heresy; and we may now point to Jefferson and to Adams, as sufficient to annihilate it. This pure and proud offering on the altar of his country, "The Notes on Virginia," honored its author abroad not less than at home; and when, shortly afterwards, the public service called him to Europe, it gave him a prompt and distinguished passport into the highest circles of science and literature.

Thus actively and usefully employed in guarding the fame, and advancing the honor and happiness of his country, the war of the Revolution came to its close; and, on the 19th of October, 1781, of which this day is the anniversary, Great Britain bowed to the ascendancy of our cause. Her last effective army struck her standard on the heights of York, and peace and independence came to bless our land.

Mr. Adams was still abroad when this great consummation of his early hopes took place: and, although the war was over, a difficult task still remained to be performed. The terms of peace were yet to be arranged, and to be arranged under circumstances of the most complicated embarrassment. That the acknowledgment of our independence was to be its first and indispensable condition, was well understood; and Mr. Adams, then at the Hague, with that decision which always marked his character, refused to leave his post and take part in the negotiation at Paris, until the powers of the British commissioner should be so enlarged as to authorize him to make that acknow-

ledgment unequivocally. I will not detain you by a rehearsal of what you so well know, the difficulties and intricacies by which this negotiation was protracted. Suffice it to say, that the firmness and skill of the American Commissioners triumphed on every point. The treaty of peace was executed; and the last seal was thus put to the independence of these States.

Thus closed the great drama of the American Revolution. And here for a moment let us pause. If the services of our departed fathers had closed at this point, as it did with many of their compatriots—with too many, if the wishes and prayers of their country could have averted it—what obligations, what honors, should we not owe to their memories! What would not the world owe to them! But, as if they had not already done enough, as if, indeed, they had done nothing, while any thing yet remained to be done, they were ready, with renovated youth and elastic step, to take a new start in the career of their emancipated country.

The Federal Constitution was adopted, and a new leaf was turned in the history of man. With what characters the page should be inscribed—whether it should open a great æra of permanent good to the human family, or pass away like a portent of direful evil, was now to depend on the wisdom and virtue of America. At this time our two great patriots were both abroad in the public service; Mr. Adams in England, where, in 1787, he refuted, by his great work “The Defence of the American Constitutions,” the wild theories of Turgot, De Mably, and Price; and Mr. Jefferson in France, where he was presenting in his own person a living and splendid refutation of the notion of degeneracy in the American man. On the adoption of the Federal Constitution, they were both called home, to lend the weight of their character and talents to this new and momentous experiment on the capacity of man for self-government. Mr. Adams was called to fill the second office under the new Government, the first having been justly conferred by the rule “*detur*

fortiori:" and Mr. Jefferson, to take the direction of the highest Executive Department. The office of Vice President afforded, as you are aware, no scope for the public display of talent. But the leisure which it allowed, enabled Mr. Adams to pour out, from his full fraught mind, another great political work, his Discourses on Davila; and, while he presided over the Senate with unexceptionable dignity and propriety, President Washington always found in him an able and honest adviser, in whom his confidence was implicit and unbounded.

Mr. Jefferson had a theatre that called for action. The Department of State was now, for the first time, to be organized. Its operations were all to be moulded into system, and an intellectual character was to be given to it, as well as the Government to which it belonged, before this nation and before the world. The frequent calls made by Congress for reports on the most abstruse questions of science connected with Government, and on those vast and novel and multifarious subjects of political economy, peculiar to this wide extended and diversified continent: discussions with the ministers of foreign Governments, more especially with those of France and England and Spain, on those great and agitating questions of international law, which were then continually arising; and instructions to our own Ministers abroad, resident at the Courts of the great belligerent Powers, and who had consequently the most delicate and discordant interests to manage; presented a series of labors for the mind, which few, very few men in this or any other country could have sustained with reputation. How Mr. Jefferson acquitted himself, you all know. It is one of the peculiarities of his character to have discharged the duties of every office to which he was called, with such exact, appropriate, and felicitous ability, that he seemed, for the time, to have been born for that alone. As an evidence of the unanimous admiration of the matchless skill and talent with which he discharged the duties of this office, I hope it

may be mentioned, without awaking any asperity of feeling, that when, at a subsequent period, he was put in nomination by his friends for the office of President, his adversaries publicly objected—"that Nature had made him only for a Secretary of State."

President Washington having set the great example, which has engrafted on the Constitution as firmly as if it had formed one of its express provisions, the principle of retiring from the office of President at the end of eight years, Mr. Adams succeeded him, and Mr. Jefferson followed Mr. Adams in the office of Vice President.

Mr. Adams came into the office of President at a time of great commotion, produced chiefly by the progress of the revolution in France, and those strong sympathies which it naturally generated here. The spirit of party was high, and in the feverish excitement of the day much was said and done, on both sides, which the voice of impartial history, if it shall descend to such details, will unquestionably condemn, and which the candid and the good on both sides lived, themselves, to regret. One incident I will mention, because it is equally honorable to both the great men whom we are uniting in these obsequies. In Virginia, where the opposition ran high, the younger politicians of the day, taking their tone from the public Journals, have, on more occasions than one, in the presence of Mr. Jefferson, imputed to Mr. Adams a concealed design to sap the foundations of the Republic, and to supply its place with a Monarchy, on the British model. The uniform answer of Mr. Jefferson to this charge will never be forgotten by those who have heard it, and of whom (as I have recently had occasion to prove,) there are many still living, besides the humble individual who is now addressing you. It was this: "Gentlemen, you do not know that man: there is not upon this earth a more perfectly honest man than John Adams. Concealment is no part of his character; of that he is utterly incapable: it is not in his nature to meditate any thing that he would not publish

to the world. The measures of the General Government are a fair subject for difference of opinion. But do not found your opinions on the notion, that there is the smallest spice of dishonesty, moral or political, in the character of John Adams: for, I know him well, and I repeat it, that a man more perfectly honest never issued from the hands of his Creator." And such is now, and has long been, the unanimous opinion of his countrymen.

Of the measures adopted during his administration you do not expect me to speak. I should offend against your own sense of propriety, were I to attempt it. We are here, to mingle together over the grave of the departed patriot, our feelings of reverence and gratitude for services whose merit we all acknowledge: and cold must be the heart which does not see and feel, in his life, enough to admire and to love, without striking one string that could produce one unhallowed note. History and biography will do ample justice to every part of his character, public and private; and impartial posterity will correct whatever errors of opinion may have been committed to his prejudice by his cotemporaries. Let it suffice for us, at this time, to know, that he administered the government with a pure, and honest, and upright heart; and that whatever he advised, flowed from the master passion of his breast, a holy and all-absorbing love for the happiness and honor of his country.

Mr. Jefferson, holding the Vice Presidency, did not leave even that negative office, as, indeed, he never left any other, without marking his occupancy with some useful and permanent vestige. For, it was during this term, that he digested and compiled that able manual which now gives the law of proceeding, not only to the two Houses of Congress, but to all the Legislatures of the States throughout the Union.

On Mr. Adams' retirement, pursuing the destiny which seems to have tied them together, Mr. Jefferson again followed him in the office which he had vacated, the Presidency of the United States: and he had the

good fortune to find, or to make, a smoother sea. The violence of the party storm gradually abated, and he was soon able to pursue his peaceful course without any material interruption. Having forborne, for the obvious reasons which have been suggested, to touch the particulars of Mr. Adams' administration, the same forbearance, for the same reasons, must be exercised with regard to Mr. Jefferson. But, forbearing details, it will be no departure from this rule to state in general the facts: that Mr. Jefferson continued at the helm for eight years, the term which the example of Washington had consecrated; that he so administered the Government as to meet the admiration and applause of a great majority of his countrymen, as the overwhelming suffrage at his second election attests; that by that majority he was thought to have presented a perfect model of a republican administration, on the true basis, and in the true spirit of the Constitution; and that, by them the measures of all the succeeding administrations have been continually brought to the standard of Mr. Jefferson's, as to an established and unquestionable test, and approved or condemned in proportion to their accordance with that standard. These are facts which are known to you all. Another fact I will mention, because it redounds so highly to the honor of his magnanimous and patriotic rival. It is this: that that part of Mr. Jefferson's administration, and of his successor treading in his steps, which was most violently opposed, the policy pursued towards the British Government subsequent to 1806, received the open, public, and powerful support of the pen, as well as the tongue, of the great sage of Quincy. The banished Aristides never gave a nobler proof of pure and disinterested patriotism. It was a genuine emanation from the altar of the Revolution, and in perfect accordance with the whole tenor of the life of our illustrious patriot sage.

Waiving all comment on Mr. Jefferson's public measures, there is yet a minor subject, which, standing where we do, there seems to be a peculiar proprie-

ty in noticing ; for, small as it is, it is strikingly characteristic of the man, and we have an immediate interest in the subject. It is this: the great objects of national concern, and the great measures which he was continually projecting and executing for the public good, on a new and vast scheme of policy wholly his own, and stamped with all the vigor and grandeur of his Olympic mind, although they were such as would not only have engrossed but overwhelmed almost any other man, did not even give full employment to him ; but with that versatile and restless activity which was prone to busy itself usefully and efficaciously with all around him, he found time to amuse himself and to gratify his natural taste for the beautiful, by directing and overlooking in person, (as many of you can witness,) the improvements and ornaments of this city of the nation : and it is to his taste and industry that we owe, among other things which it were needless to enumerate, this beautiful avenue,* which he left in such order as to excite the admiration of all who approached us.

Having closed his administration, he was followed by the applause, the gratitude, and blessings of his country, into that retirement which no man was ever better fitted to grace and enjoy. And from this retirement, together with his precursor, the venerable patriarch of Quincy, could enjoy that supreme of all earthly happiness, the retrospect of a life well and greatly spent in the service of his country and mankind. The successful warrior, who has desolated whole empires for his own aggrandizement, the successful usurper of his country's rights and liberties, may have their hours of swelling pride, in which they may look back with a barbarous joy upon the triumph of their talents, and feast upon the adulation of the sycophants that surround them : but, night and silence come ; and conscience takes her turn. The bloody field rises upon the startled imagination. The shades of the

* Pennsylvania Avenue.

slaughtered innocent stalk, in terrific procession, before the couch. The agonizing cry of countless widows and orphans invades the ear. The bloody dagger of the assassin plays, in airy terror, before the vision. Violated liberty lifts her avenging lance: and a down-trodden nation rises, before them, in all the majesty of its wrath. What, what are the hours of a splendid wretch like this, compared with those that shed their poppies and their roses upon the pillows of our peaceful and virtuous patriots! Every night bringing to them the balm and health of repose, and every morning offering to them "their history in a nation's eyes!" This, this it is to be greatly virtuous: and be this the only ambition that shall ever touch an American bosom!

Still unexhausted by such a life of service in the cause of his country, Mr. Jefferson found yet another and most appropriate employment for his old age: the erection of a seat of science in his native State. The University of Virginia is his work. His, the first conception; his, the whole impulse and direction; his, the varied and beautiful architecture, and the entire superintendence of its erection: the whole scheme of its studies, its organization, and government, are his. He is, therefore, indeed the father of the University of Virginia. That it may fulfil, to the full extent, the great and patriotic purposes and hopes of its founder, cannot fail to be the wish of every American bosom. This was the last and crowning labor of Mr. Jefferson's life: a crown so poetically appropriate, that fancy might well suppose it to have been wreathed and placed on his brow by the hand of the epic muse herself.

It is the remark of one of the most elegant writers of antiquity, in the beautiful essay which he has left us "on Old age," that "to those who have not within themselves the resources of living well and happily, every age is oppressive; but that to those who have, nothing is an evil which the necessity of nature brings along with it." How rich our two patriots were in

these internal resources, you all know. How lightly they bore the burden of increasing years was apparent from the cheerfulness and vigor with which, after having survived the age to which they properly belonged, they continued to live among their posterity. How happy they were in their domestic relations, how beloved by their neighbors and friends, how revered and honored by their country and by the friends of liberty in every quarter of the world, is a matter of open and public notoriety. Their houses were the constant and thronged resort of the votaries of virtue, and science, and genius, and patriotism, from every portion of the civilized globe; and no one ever left them without confessing that his highest expectations had been realized, and even surpassed, in the interview.

Of "the chief of the Argonauts," as Mr. Jefferson so classically and so happily styled his illustrious friend of the North, it is my misfortune to be able to speak only by report. But every representation concurs, in drawing the same pleasing and affecting picture of the Roman simplicity in which that Father of his Country lived; of the frank, warm, cordial, and elegant reception that he gave to all who approached him; of the interesting kindness with which he disbursed the golden treasures of his experience, and shed around him the rays of his descending sun. His conversation was rich in anecdote and characters of the times that were past; rich in political and moral instruction; full of that best of wisdom, which is learnt from real life, and flowing from his heart with that warm and honest frankness, that fervor of feeling and force of diction, which so strikingly distinguished him in the meridian of his life. Many of us heard that simple and touching account given of a parting scene with him, by one of our eloquent divines: When he rose up from that little couch behind the door, on which he was wont to rest his aged and weary limbs, and with his silver locks hanging on each side of his honest face, stretched forth that pure hand, which was never soiled even by suspicion, and gave his kind and

parting benediction. Such was the blissful and honored retirement of the sage of Quincy. Happy the life, which, verging upon a century, had met with but one serious political disappointment! and even for that, he had lived to receive a golden atonement, "even in that quarter in which he had garnered up his heart."

Let us now turn for a moment to the patriot of the South. The Roman moralist, in that great work which he has left for the government of man in all the offices of life, has descended even to prescribe the kind of habitation in which an honored and distinguished man should dwell. It should not, he says, be small, and mean, and sordid: nor, on the other hand, extended with profuse and wanton extravagance. It should be large enough to receive and accommodate the visiters which such a man never fails to attract, and suited in its ornaments, as well as its dimensions, to the character and fortune of the individual. Monticello has now lost its great charm. Those of you who have not already visited it, will not be very apt to visit it, hereafter: and, from the feelings which you cherish for its departed owner, I persuade myself, that you will not be displeased with a brief and rapid sketch of that abode of domestic bliss, that temple of science. Nor is it, indeed, foreign to the express purpose of this meeting, which, in looking to "his life and character," naturally embraces his home and his domestic habits. Can any thing be indifferent to us, which was so dear to him, and which was a subject of such just admiration to the hundreds and thousands that were continually resorting to it, as to an object of pious pilgrimage?

The Mansion House at Monticello, was built and furnished in the days of his prosperity. In its dimensions, its architecture, its arrangements, and ornaments, it is such a one as became the character and fortune of the man. It stands upon an elliptic plain, formed by cutting down the apex of a mountain; and, on the West, stretching away to the North and the South, it commands a view of the Blue Ridge for a hundred and

fifty miles, and brings under the eye one of the boldest and most beautiful horizons in the world: while, on the East, it presents an extent of prospect, bounded only by the spherical form of the earth, in which nature seems to sleep in eternal repose, as if to form one of her finest contrasts with the rude and rolling grandeur on the West. In the wide prospect, and scattered to the North and South, are several detached mountains, which contribute to animate and diversify this enchanting landscape; and among them, to the South, Williss' Mountain, which is so interestingly depicted in his Notes. From this summit, the Philosopher was wont to enjoy that spectacle, among the sublimest of Nature's operations, the looming of the distant mountains; and to watch the motions of the planets, and the greater resolution of the celestial sphere. From this summit, too, the patriot could look down, with uninterrupted vision, upon the wide expanse of the world around, for which he considered himself born; and upward, to the open and vaulted Heavens which he seemed to approach, as if to keep him continually in mind of his high responsibility. It is indeed a prospect in which you see and feel, at once, that nothing mean or little could live. It is a scene fit to nourish those great and high-souled principles which formed the elements of his character, and was a most noble and appropriate post, for such a sentinel over the rights and liberties of man.

Approaching the house on the East, the visiter instinctively paused, to cast around one thrilling glance at this magnificent panorama: and then passed to the vestibule, where, if he had not been previously informed, he would immediately perceive that he was entering the house of no common man. In the spacious and lofty hall which opens before him, he marks no tawdry and unmeaning ornaments; but before, on the right, on the left, all around, the eye is struck and gratified with objects of science and taste, so classed and arranged as to produce their finest effect. On one side, specimens of sculpture set out, in such order, as to exhibit at a *coup d'œil*, the historical progress of that art: from

the first rude attempts of the aborigines of our country, up to that exquisite and finished bust of the great patriot himself, from the master hand of Caracci. On the other side, the visiter sees displayed a vast collection of specimens of Indian art, their paintings, weapons, ornaments and manufactures; on another, an array of the fossil productions of our country, mineral and animal; the polished remains of those colossal monsters that once trod our forests, and are no more; and a variegated display of the branching honors of those "monarchs of the waste," that still people the wilds of the American Continent.

From this hall he was ushered into a noble saloon, from which the glorious landscape of the West again bursts upon his view; and which, within, is hung thick around with the finest productions of the pencil—historical paintings of the most striking subjects from all countries, and all ages; the portraits of distinguished men and patriots, both of Europe and America, and medallions and engravings in endless profusion.

While the visiter was yet lost in the contemplation of these treasures of the arts and sciences, he was startled by the approach of a strong and sprightly step, and turning with instinctive reverence to the door of entrance, he was met by the tall, and animated, and stately figure of the patriot himself—his countenance beaming with intelligence and benignity, and his outstretched hand, with its strong and cordial pressure, confirming the courteous welcome of his lips. And then came that charm of manner and conversation that passes all description—so cheerful—so unassuming—so free, and easy, and frank, and kind, and gay—that even the young, and overawed, and embarrassed visiter at once forgot his fears, and felt himself by the side of an old and familiar friend. There was no effort, no ambition in the conversation of the philosopher. It was as simple and unpretending as nature itself. And while in this easy manner he was pouring out instruction, like light from an inexhaustible solar fountain, he seemed continually to be asking, instead of giving in-

formation. The visiter felt himself lifted, by the contact, into a new and nobler region of thought, and became surprised at his own buoyancy and vigor. He could not, indeed, help being astounded, now and then, at those transcendant leaps of the mind, which he saw made without the slightest exertion, and the ease with which this wonderful man played with subjects which he had been in the habit of considering among the *argumenta crucis* of the intellect. And then there seemed to be no end to his knowledge. He was a thorough master of every subject that was touched. From the details of the humblest mechanic art, up to the highest summit of science, he was perfectly at his ease, and every where at home. There seemed to be no longer any *terra incognita* of the human understanding: for, what the visiter had thought so, he now found reduced to a familiar garden walk; and all this carried off so lightly, so playfully, so gracefully, so engagingly, that he won every heart that approached him, as certainly as he astonished every mind.

Mr. Jefferson was wont to remark, that he never left the conversation of Dr. Franklin without carrying away with him something new and useful. How often, and how truly, has the same remark been made of him. Nor is this wonderful, when we reflect, that, that mind of matchless vigor and versatility had been, all his life, intensely engaged in conversing with the illustrious dead, or following the march of science in every land, or bearing away, on its own steady and powerful wing, into new and unexplored regions of thought.

Shall I follow him to the table of his elegant hospitality, and show him to you in the bosom of his enchanting family? Alas! those attic days are gone; that sparkling eye is quenched; that voice of pure and delicate affection, which ran with such brilliancy and effect through the whole compass of colloquial music, now bright with wit, now melting with tenderness, is hushed forever in the grave! But let me leave a theme on which friendship and gratitude have, I fear, already been tempted to linger too long.

There was one solace of the declining years of both these great men, which must not be passed. It is that correspondence which arose between them, after their retirement from public life. That correspondence, it is to be hoped, will be given to the world. If it ever shall, I speak from knowledge when I say, it will be found to be one of the most interesting and affecting that the world has ever seen. That "cold cloud" which had hung for a time over their friendship, passed away with the conflict out of which it had grown, and the attachment of their early life returned in all its force. They had both now bid adieu, a final adieu, to all public employments, and were done with all the agitating passions of life. They were dead to the ambitious world; and this correspondence resembles, more than any thing else, one of those conversations in the Elysium of the ancients, which the shades of the departed great were supposed by them to hold, with regard to the affairs of the world they had left. There are the same playful allusions to the points of difference that had divided their parties; the same mutual, and light, and unimpassioned raillery on their own past misconceptions and mistakes; the same mutual and just admiration and respect for their many virtues and services to mankind. That correspondence was, to them both, one of the most genial employments of their old age; and it reads a lesson of wisdom on the bitterness of party spirit, by which the wise and the good will not fail to profit.

Besides this affectionate intercourse between them, you are aware of the extensive correspondence which they maintained with others, and of which some idea may be formed by those letters which, since their death, have already broken upon us through the press, from quarters so entirely unexpected. They were considered as the living historians of the Revolution, and of the past age, as well as oracles of wisdom to all who consulted them. Their habit in this particular seems to have been the same; never to omit answering any respectful letter they received, no matter how obscure the individual, or how insignificant the

subject. With Mr. Jefferson this was a sacred law, and as he always wrote at a polygraphic desk, copies have been preserved of every letter. His correspondence travelled far beyond his own country, and embraced within its circle many of the most distinguished men of his age in Europe. What a feast for the mind may we not expect from the published letters of these excellent men! They were both masters in this way, though somewhat contrasted. Mr. Adams, plain, nervous, and emphatic, the thought couched in the fewest and strongest words, and striking with a kind of epigrammatic force. Mr. Jefferson, flowing with easy and careless melody, the language at the same time pruned of every redundant word, and giving the thought with the happiest precision, the aptest words dropping unbidden and unsought into their places, as if they had fallen from the skies; and so beautiful, so felicitous, as to fill the mind with a succession of delightful surprises, while the judgment is, at the same time, made captive by the closely compacted energy of the argument. Mr. Jefferson's style is so easy and harmonious, as to have led superficial readers to remark, that he was deficient in strength; as if ruggedness and abruptness were essential to strength. Mr. Jefferson's strength was inherent in the thoughts and conceptions, though hidden by the light and graceful vestments which he threw over them. The internal divinity existed and was felt, though concealed under the finely harmonized form of a man; and if he did not exhibit himself in his compositions with the *insignia* of Hercules, the shaggy lion's skin and the knotted club; he bore the full quiver and the silver bow of Apollo; and every polished shaft that he loosened from the string, told with unerring and fatal precision:

Δαίμη δὲ κλαγγὴ γένετ' ἀργυρεοῖο βίωο.

These two great men, so eminently distinguished among the patriots of the Revolution, and so illustrious by their subsequent services, became still more so, by having so long survived all that were most highly

conspicuous among their coëvals. All the stars of first magnitude, in the equatorial and tropical regions, had long since gone down, and still they remained. Still, they stood full in view, like those two resplendent constellations near the opposite poles, which never set to the inhabitants of the neighboring zones.

But, they too were doomed at length to set: and such was their setting as no American bosom can ever forget!

In the midst of their fast decaying strength, and when it was seen that the approach of death was certain, their country and its glory still occupied their thoughts, and circulated with the last blood that was ebbing to their hearts. Those who surrounded the death-bed of Mr. Jefferson report, that in the few short intervals of delirium that occurred, his mind manifestly relapsed to the age of the Revolution. He talked, in broken sentences, of the Committees of Safety, and the rest of that great machinery, which he imagined to be still in action. One of his exclamations was "Warn the Committee to be on their guard;" and he instantly rose in his bed, with the help of his attendants, and went through the act of writing a hurried note. But, these intervals were few and short. His reason was almost constantly upon her throne, and the only aspiration he was heard to breathe, was the prayer, that he might live to see the fourth of July. When that day came, all that he was heard to whisper, was the repeated ejaculation—"Nunc Domine dimittas"—Now, Lord, let thy servant depart in peace! And the prayer of the patriot was heard and answered.

The Patriarch of Quincy, too, with the same certainty of death before him, prayed only for the protraction of his life to the same day. His prayer was also heard: and when a messenger from the neighboring festivities, unapprized of his danger, was deputed to ask him for the honor of a toast, he showed the object on which his dying eyes were fixed, and exclaimed with energy, "Independence forever!" His country first, his country last, his country always!

" O save my country—Heaven ! he said—and died ! ”

Hitherto, fellow-citizens, the Fourth of July had been celebrated among us, only as the anniversary of our independence, and its votaries had been merely human beings. But at its last recurrence—the great Jubilee of the nation—the anniversary, it may well be termed, of the liberty of man—Heaven, itself, mingled visibly in the celebration, and hallowed the day anew by a double apotheosis. Is there one among us to whom this language seems too strong ? Let him recall his own feelings, and the objection will vanish. When the report first reached us, of the death of the great man whose residence was nearest, who among us was not struck with the circumstance that he should have been removed on the day of his own highest glory ? And who, after the first shock of the intelligence had passed, did not feel a thrill of mournful delight at the characteristic beauty of the close of such a life. But while our bosoms were yet swelling with admiration at this singularly beautiful coincidence, when the second report immediately followed, of the death of the great sage of Quincy, on the same day—I appeal to yourselves—is there a voice that was not hushed, is there a heart that did not quail, at this close manifestation of the hand of Heaven in our affairs ! Philosophy, recovered of her surprise, may affect to treat the coincidence as fortuitous. But Philosophy herself was mute, at the moment, under the pressure of the feeling that these illustrious men had rather been translated, than had died. It is in vain to tell us that men die by thousands every day in the year, all over the world. The wonder is not that two men have died on the same day, but that two such men, after having performed so many and such splendid services in the cause of liberty—after the multitude of other coincidences which seem to have linked their destinies together—after having lived so long together, the objects of their country's joint veneration—after having been spared to witness the great triumph

of their toils at home—and looked together from Pisgah's top, on the sublime effect of that grand impulse which they had given to the same glorious cause throughout the world, should, on this fiftieth anniversary of the day on which they had ushered that cause into light, be both caught up to Heaven, together, in the midst of their raptures! Is there a being, of heart so obdurate and sceptical, as not to feel the hand and hear the voice of Heaven in this wonderful dispensation! And may we not, with reverence, interpret its language? Is it not this? "These are my beloved servants, in whom I am well pleased. They have finished the work for which I sent them into the world: and are now called to their reward. Go ye, and do likewise!"

One circumstance, alone, remains to be noticed. In a private memorandum found among some other obituary papers and relics of Mr. Jefferson, is a suggestion, in case a memorial over him should ever be thought of, that a granite obelisk, of small dimensions, should be erected, with the following inscription:

HERE LIES BURIED
THOMAS JEFFERSON,
Author of the Declaration of Independence,
Of the Statutes of Virginia, for religious freedom,
And Father of the University of Virginia.

All the long catalogue of his great, and splendid, and glorious services, reduced to this brief and modest summary!

Thus lived and thus died our sainted Patriots! May their spirits still continue to hover over their countrymen, inspire all their counsels, and guide them in the same virtuous and noble path! And may that God, in whose hands are the issues of all things, confirm and perpetuate, to us, the inestimable boon which, through their agency, he has bestowed; and make our Columbia, the bright exemplar for all the struggling sons of liberty around the globe!

DISCOURSE

DELIVERED

AT SCHENECTADY, JULY 22, A. D. 1823, BEFORE THE
NEW YORK ALPHA OF THE PHI BETA KAPPA,

BY DE WITT CLINTON.



MR. PRESIDENT,

AND GENTLEMEN OF THE SOCIETY:

IN accepting the honor of your renewed invitations to appear at this place, I have not been insensible of your kind preference; and when you were pleased to intimate that the deep interest of science, in exhibitions of this nature, might be promoted by my co-operation, I considered it my imperative duty to yield a cheerful compliance. When I endeavor to enforce those considerations which ought to operate upon us generally as men, and particularly as Americans, to attend to the cultivation of knowledge, you will not, I am persuaded, expect that I shall act the holiday orator, or attempt an ambitious parade, an ostentatious display, or a gaudy exhibition, which would neither suit the character of the society, the disposition of the speaker, the solemnity of the place, or the importance of the occasion. What I say shall come strictly within the purview of the institution, shall be comprised in the language of unvarnished truth, and shall be directed with an exclusive view to advance the interests of literature. I shall not step aside to embellish or to dazzle, to cull a flower or to collect a gem. Truth, like beauty, needs not the aid of ornament, and the cause of knowledge requires no factitious assistance, for it stands on its own merits, supporting and supported by the primary interests of society, and deriving its effulgent light from the radiations of heaven.

Man without cultivation differs but little from the animals which resemble him in form. His ideas would

be few and glimmering, and his meaning would be conveyed by signs or by confused sounds. His food would be the acorn or locust—his habitation, the cave—his pillow, the rock—his bed, the leaves of the forest—his clothes, the skins of wild beasts. Destitute of accommodations he would roam at large seeking for food, and evincing in all his actions, that the state of untutored nature is a state of war. If we cast our eyes over the pages of history, or view the existing state of the world, we will find that this description is not exaggerated or overcharged. Many nations are in a condition still more deplorable and debased, sunk to the level of brutes, and neither in the appearance of their bodies or in the character of their minds, bearing a resemblance to civilized humanity. Others are somewhat more advanced, and begin to feel the day-spring from on high—while those that have been acclimated to virtue and naturalized to intelligence, have passed through a severe course of experiments and a long ordeal of sufferings.

Almost all the calamities of man, except the physical evils which are inherent in his nature, are in a great measure to be imputed to erroneous views of religion or bad systems of government; and these cannot be co-existent for any considerable time with an extensive diffusion of knowledge. Either the predominance of intelligence will destroy the government, or the government will destroy it. Either it will extirpate superstition and enthusiasm, or they will contaminate its purity and prostrate its usefulness. Knowledge is the cause as well as the effect of good government. No system of government can answer the benign purposes of the social combinations of man, which is not predicated on liberty, and no creed of religion can sustain unsullied purity or support its high destination, which is mingled with the corruptions of human government. Christianity is in its essence, its doctrines and its forms, republican. It teaches our descent from a common parent: it inculcates the natural equality of mankind; and it points to our origin and our end; to our nativity and our graves, and to our immortal des-

tinies, as illustrations of this impressive truth. But at an early period it was pressed into the service of the potentates of the earth; the unnatural union of church and state was consummated; and the sceptre of Constantine was supported by the cross of Jesus. The light of knowledge was shut out from the general mass and confined to the selected organs of tyranny; and man was for ages enveloped in the thickest gloom of intellectual and moral darkness. At the present crisis in human affairs, we perceive a great and portentous contest between power and liberty—between the monarchical and the representative systems. The agonies and convulsions of resuscitating nature have agitated the nations, and before they are restored to their rights and the world to its repose, the hand of famine, the scythe of pestilence, and the sword of depopulation, will fill up the measure of human calamity.

The present state of the world exhibits an extraordinary aspect. In former times, it was the policy of the sovereign to encourage eminent merit in literature, science and the arts. The glory that was radiated on intellectual excellence was reflected back on the government; but these dispensations of munificence were confined to the Aristotles, the Virgils and the Plinies of the age. The body of the people were kept in a state of profound ignorance, and considered as the *profanum vulgus*, to be employed as hewers of wood and drawers of water, and to be used as beasts of burden or of prey as the policy or the caprice of the despot should prescribe.

The revolution, effected by the invention of printing, has created a corps of literary men in the cities, the universities, the academies, the lyceums, and the philosophical societies of the most arbitrary governments of Europe, which have exercised an influence over public opinion almost irresistible. Man is the creature of imitation and sympathy: and however callous the sovereign might be to public opinion, yet it predominated over his ministers, who in reality wielded the sceptre. The consequence was, that a more extensive diffusion of knowledge was promoted, and the blessings of instruction visited the cottage as well as

the palace. Monitorial schools and religious societies were generally established, and the sunshine of mental and moral illumination penetrated the darkness which covered the nations. To know our rights is to assert them. The principles of the American revolution became the text-book of liberty, and its practical commentaries are to be read in the events now occurring in various parts of the globe. Greece has unfurled the holy standard of liberty, and waves it in defiance over the crescent of Mahomet. Spanish America is breaking the chains of tyranny: Spain and Portugal have drawn the sword in vindication of the rights of man. Public opinion is operating with magic influence in Great Britain in favor of the oppressed nations; and the result will show, that the physical strength of Europe must follow the train of its moral power. It is in vain to say, that the people now in commotion are unfit for free government. Conceding the fact, it avails nothing in the argument. The human character is principally moulded by knowledge, religion, freedom and government. The free states of Greece exhibited different aspects of mind, of manners, and of morals. But we no longer remark, as a distinguishing characteristic, the ethereal spirit of the Athenian, the pastoral simplicity of the Arcadian, the stupidity of the Bæotian, or the laconic brevity of the Spartan.* The sweeping hand of despotism has confounded in one mass all the delicate coloring, the lights and shades of the picture. In revolutionary times, great talents and great virtues, as well as great vices and great follies, spring into being. The energies of our nature are put into requisition, and during the whirlwind and the tempest, innumerable evils will be perpetrated. But all the transient mischiefs of revolutions are mild, when compared with the permanent calamities of arbitrary power. The one is a sweeping deluge, an awful tornado, which quickly passes away; but the other is a volcano, continually ejecting rivers of lava—an earthquake, burying whole

* Hughes' Travels in Greece.

countries in ruin. The alleged inaptitude of man for liberty, is the effect of the oppressions which he has suffered; and until a free government can shed its propitious influence over time—until, perhaps, a new generation has risen up under the new order of things, with new habits and new principles, society will be in a state of agitation and mutation, faction will be lord of the ascendant, and frenzy and fury, denunciation and proscription, will be the order of the day. The dilemma is inevitable. Either the happiness of the many, or the predominance of the few, must be sacrificed. The flame of liberty and the light of knowledge, emanate from the same sacred fire, and subsist on the same aliment: and the seeds of instruction, widely disseminated, will, like the serpent's teeth in the Pagan mythology that were sown into the earth, rise up against oppression in the shape of the iron men of Cadmus. In such a cause, who can hesitate to make an election? The factions and convulsions of free governments, are not so sanguinary in character, or terrific in effects, as the animosities and intestine wars of monarchies, about the succession—the insurrections of the military—the proscriptions of the priesthood, and the cruelties of the administration. The spirit of a republic is the friend, and the genius of a monarchy is the enemy, of peace. The potentates of the earth have, for centuries back, maintained large standing armies, and on the most frivolous pretexts, have created havoc and desolation. And when we compare the world, as it is under arbitrary power, with the world as it was under free republics, what an awful contrast does it exhibit! What a solemn lesson does it inculcate! The ministers of famine and pestilence, of death and destruction, have formed the van, and brought up the rear, of despotic authority. The monuments of the arts—the fabrics of genius and skill, and the sublime erections of piety and science, have been prostrated in the dust; and the places where Demosthenes and Cicero spoke, where Homer and Virgil sang, and where Plato and Aristotle taught, are now exhibited as mementos of the

perishable nature of human glory. The forum of Rome is converted into a market for cattle:* the sacred fountain of Castalia is surrounded, not by the muses and the graces, but by the semi-barbarous girls of Albania:† the laurel groves, and the deified heights of Parnassus, are the asylum of banditti: Babylon can only be traced by its bricks: the sands of the desert have overwhelmed the splendid city of Palmyra, and are daily encroaching on the fertile territories of the Nile; and the Malaria has driven man from the fairest portions of Italy, and pursued him to the very gates of the Eternal City.

Considerations like these announce to us, in the most impressive manner, the importance of our position in the civilized world, and the necessity of maintaining it. The reciprocal action of knowledge and free government on each other, partake in some measure of the character of identity; for wherever liberty is firmly established, knowledge must be a necessary concomitant. And if we desire to occupy this exalted ground—if we wish to improve, to extend, and to perpetuate the blessings of freedom,* it is essential, absolutely essential, to improve, to extend, and to perpetuate the blessings of education. Let us not deceive ourselves by the delusions of overweening confidence; and the chimeras of impregnable security, and fondly suppose that we are to rise superior to the calamities of other nations. Our climate is salubrious, and we are free from pestilence—our soil is fertile, and famine is a stranger—our character is pacific, and war is a rare occurrence; but if we only suppose a relaxation of the sinews of industry, and the presence of a tiger-like thirst for human blood, then the consequent neglect of productive industry, and the vast accumulation of taxes, would drain the resources of individuals, and impoverish the public treasury; and plague and famine, poverty and depopulation, would follow in the train of pre-existing calamities. Nor is

* Eustace's Italy.

† Hughes' Travels.

it to be concealed, that dangers of the most formidable nature may assail us from other sources—some peculiar to our situation, and others that are common to all free states.

Faction and luxury—the love of money and the love of power, were the hydra-headed monsters that destroyed the ancient republics. At the time that the Roman commonwealth was overturned, all ranks of men were so corrupted, that tables were publicly set out, upon which the candidates for offices were professedly ready to pay the people the price of their votes; and they came not only to give their voices to the man who had bought them, but with all manner of weapons to fight for him. Hence it often happened, that they did not part without polluting the tribunal with blood and murder, and the city was a perpetual scene of anarchy.* The justice of heaven pursued the perpetrators of these enormities, and Rome was scourged with a series of the most detestable tyrants that ever disgraced the character of humanity. Although corruption will not at first present itself under such hideous forms, yet its approaches will be insidious, undermining and dangerous. It will appeal to cupidity and to ambition, by magnificent promises and by donatives of office, if not by largesses of money. Good men are too often lethargic and inactive—bad men are generally bold and adventurous. And unless arrested by the vigilant intelligence and virtuous indignation of the community, faction will, in process of time, contaminate all the sources of public prosperity—a deleterious poison will be infused into the vital principles of the body politic—intrigue, ignorance, and impudence will be the passports to public honors—and the question will be, not whether the man is fit for the office, but whether the office is fit for the man. In this crisis of the republic, its degenerate and unprincipled sons will unite in a common crusade against the public good, and will encircle the land with a cordon of corrupt and daring spirits, like the peccant hu-

* Plutarch.

mors of the body, which, in a dangerous disease, collect in the morbid part of the system.

There are also peculiar circumstances in our situation, which ought to silence high-toned arrogance, and admonish us of the dangers which surround us. The experiment of a great empire, founded on the federative principle, has not been fully tested by the efflux of time and the pressure of events. The ancient democracies, where the people legislated in person, were ruined by the smallness of their area. The impulses of faction were sudden, unchecked, and overwhelming. An extensive republic, like ours, may be destroyed by a conspiracy of the members against the head, or the power of government may be spent as it extends, like a circle in the water, which is lost by its own expansion. And an apprehension of this occurrence may induce the establishment of standing armies in the extremities of the empire, which as in the days of ancient Rome, will rush to the capital, to divide the spoils of power and wealth. Nor is it to be concealed, that a spirit is active in the community, which tends to the destruction of the union, and the consequent subversion of the best hopes of man. It may be considered as giving too much into refinement, to intimate that the sectional prejudices which prevail in certain parts of the union, may be derived from hereditary antipathies and feelings; and that as the eastern states were chiefly settled by the Puritans or Roundheads of England, and the principal southern states by the Cavaliers or Royalists, a diversity of manners was entailed on their progeny, which has tended to increase and exasperate the ancient animosities that were at the same time transmitted. I shall not, although I should be fortified by the great names of Aristotle, Bacon, Berkeley, Buffon and Montesquieu, rely on the operation of physical causes, although perhaps they are not without their influence. It was the opinion of the Stagyrte, that the climate of Greece was the best possible one for the production of great men. The Greeks, said he, hold a middle place in physical and moral qualities, as well as topographical situation, between

the northern Europeans and the southern Asiatics, possessing the courage of the former, without their torpor of intellect, and the ingenuity of the latter, without their abject disposition. Lord Bacon has observed, that the inhabitants of the south are in general more ingenious than those of the north; but that where the native of a cold climate has genius, he rises to a higher pitch than can be realized by the southern wits. And Bishop Berkeley* has illustrated this opinion, by comparing the southern wits to cucumbers, which are commonly all good in their kind, but at best are an insipid fruit, while the northern geniuses are like melons, of which not one in fifty is good, but when it is so, it has an exquisite relish. However pertinent this doctrine may be, where it was intended to apply, it can have but little weight in reference to us. The difference of latitude and temperature is not so great as to produce the predicated results; and so far as facts can be ascertained, they will not bear out the ascription. It is probable that the causes so much to be deprecated, come under the denomination of moral, and are to be found in slavery; for wherever it prevails, it generates an anti-commercial and anti-manufacturing spirit; and at the same time, it produces a lofty sense of independence, which is among the strongest preservatives of our republican governments. In the other states, where commerce and manufactures are cultivated as well as agriculture, there is no real collision of interest with the states purely agricultural. There is, on the contrary, an identity; and although the prosperity of each is the prosperity of all, yet jealousies will spring out of legislative encouragement and protection of these great interests. To encourage the fabrics of art, is to encourage the fabrics of nature—to protect manufactures, is to advance the growth of the raw materials of which they are made—to countenance commerce, is to countenance cheapness of transportation and goodness of market—and to promote the wealth of any member or section of the

* Berkeley's Minute Philosopher.

union, is to enhance its ability to use the fabrics and to consume the productions of the other. The growing expansion of liberal feelings, and the illuminating progress of political philosophy, have had a salutary tendency in checking prejudices and antipathies which have too much prevailed. But, little to our honor, I speak it with regret, they have been recently excited by a contest of equestrian swiftness. In the Olympic games, where enlightened Greece assembled, where Homer recited his poem and Thucydides his history, the laureled crown, the "*palma nobilis*,"* was awarded to the man, not to the beast; but the late display reminds us of the degenerate days of Rome, when a horse was raised to the honors of the consulship; and of the Prasini and the Veneti, the green and blue factions, which arose from those colors of livery in horse-races, and which accelerated, if not occasioned the ruin of the Greek empire.†

The necessity of counteracting the tendency of all human institutions to debasement—of guarding with efficacious circumspection against the advances of anarchy and tyranny, and of preventing the evils to which we are peculiarly exposed from expanded territory and geographical prejudices, must be obvious; and for this purpose, it is essential to attend, with increased zeal, to the great interests of education, and to promote with unrelaxed fervor the sacred cause of science. Education includes moral as well as intellectual culture—the georgics of the heart as well as of the head; and we must emphatically look up to a general diffusion of knowledge as the palladium of a free government—the guarantee of the representative system, and the ægis of our federative existence.

Is it necessary, on this occasion, to show the important connexion between science and all the arts, which contribute to the sustenance, the accommodation, and the embellishment of human life? The analytic researches of chemistry have opened to us a knowledge of the constituent parts of soils, minerals, vegetables,

* Horace.

† Gibbon.

and other substances, and have developed their useful application. From the first conception of the propulsion of vessels by steam by the Marquis of Worcester, to its consummation by Fulton, how slow was the progress—how difficult the accomplishment! And this could never have been effected, had it not received the aids of chemical discovery, of mathematical calculation, and of mechanical philosophy. All that relates to the economy of labor by machinery—to the facilitation of intercourse by canals and bridges—to naval, civil, and military architecture—to the improvement of agriculture—to the advancement of the mechanic arts—must be derived, directly or indirectly, from scientific research.

It is an ordinance of heaven, that man must be employed, or be unhappy. Mental or corporeal labor is the destination of his nature; and when he ceases to be active, he ceases to be useful, and descends to the level of vegetable life. And certainly those pursuits which call into activity his intellectual powers, must contribute most to his felicity, his dignity and his usefulness. The vigorous direction of an active mind to the accomplishment of good objects, forms its most extatic delights. "*Hæc studia adolescentiam alunt, senectutem oblectant, secundas res ornant, adversis perfugium ac solatium præbent, delectant domi, non impediunt foris, pernoctant nobiscum, peregrinantur, rusticantur.*"*

The honor and glory of a nation consist in the illustrious achievements of its sons in the cabinet and the field—in the science and learning which compose the knowledge of man—in the arts and inventions which administer to his accommodation, and in the virtues which exalt his character. Scarcely two centuries have elapsed since the settlement of these United States, and in that period we have seen a Washington, a Henry, a Franklin, a Rittenhouse, and a Fulton—the most splendid names in war, in eloquence, in philosophy, in astronomy, and in mechanics, which the world

* Cicero.

has ever witnessed. The congress of patriots who proclaimed our independence in the face of an admiring world, and in the view of approving heaven, have descended, with three exceptions, to the grave; and in this illustrious band were comprised more virtue and wisdom, and patriotism and energy, than in any association of ancient or modern times. I might proceed, and pronounce a eulogium on our savans, who have illustrated philosophy and the exact sciences—on our literati, who have explored the depths and ascended the heights of knowledge—on our poets, who have strung the lyre of Apollo—on our painters, who have combined the sublime and the beautiful in the graphic art—on our statesmen, who have taught the ways and means of establishing the greatest happiness of the greatest number—and on our theologians, who have vindicated the ways of God to man. But I forbear. The task of selection is at all times invidious; and most of the distinguished men to whom I allude, are still living, and probably some of them are now present. And I ought certainly neither to offend their modesty, nor violate my sense of self-respect, by the obtrusion of praise which is not required by the occasion, and which will be more suitably, and unquestionably most liberally, dispensed by future times.

When we consider the small areas in which the insignia of human greatness have been displayed, we will find equal cause for astonishment and exultation. Attica was not more extensive than some of our counties, and the whole of Greece did not exceed this state in dimensions. Rome, for a long period, did not cover as great an extent: and the Swiss Cantons, the United Netherlands, and England, when compared with the illustrious men and the illustrious deeds of which they can boast, are of a very limited space. The United States contain more than a twentieth part of the land of this globe, and not six hundred thousand square miles less than the whole of Europe. The Deity has placed us on a mighty continent: the plastic hand of nature has operated on a stupendous scale. Our rivers and lakes—our cataracts and mountains—

our soil and climate—bear the impress of greatness, of fertility, of salubrity. In this spacious theatre, replete with the sublime and the beautiful, let us act a correspondent part. This state, which now has a population of a million and a half, is capable of supporting ten millions of souls, and before this century closes, this maximum will be attained. And if in the councils of the Almighty it is decreed, that we shall continue to advance in all that can render a people intelligent and virtuous, prosperous and happy, with what reverence will posterity regard the memory of those who have laid the foundation of such greatness and renown!

The elementary parts of education in common schools, are the *substrata* of the studies of the academy and the college—and then again the acquisitions of those institutions become the basis of professional pursuits in divinity, law or medicine, and the foundation of that information which leads to more momentous advances in the cabinet, the senate or the field—which penetrates the regions of discovery and invention, and which enlightens the world by literary disquisition and scientific investigation. Giving full credit to all the benefits derived from the prescribed courses of collegiate studies, perhaps the faculties of young men are more powerfully evolved by institutions like the present, which generate habits of observation and reflection, and which produce ability in composition and facility in public speaking. And equally striking are the benefits of the extensive libraries within reach, where the “relics of the ancient saints of literature, full of true virtue and without delusion or imposture,”* and the oblations and offerings of the votaries of learning in other times, are preserved.

The field of honor and usefulness is now before you. Whatever direction you take, whatever course you adopt, it is in your power to become eminent. The first man in his profession is often absolutely, and always relatively, a great man. In this country particularly, every man has it in his power to be the architect

* Bacon.

of his own fortune. And when he rises, let him ascend the pyramid of greatness, not by the creeping tortuous windings of the reptile, but by the sublime flight of the bird of Jove. The eagle erects his aerie on the mountain top—looks at the sun with undazzled eyes, and defies the thunder and the lightning. The serpent creeps on the earth, hides in the cavern, and sinks into torpidity.

Without referring to the inducements for exertion arising from the successful enterprises of our citizens at home, it must be sufficient to animate you to active industry, by pointing out the harvest of profit and glory which has been reaped abroad. West, of Pennsylvania, has delighted and astonished the world by his pictorial performances. Murray, of New York, has written the best work on English Grammar, evincing a mind of the most lucid, discriminating and arranging constitution, and he is now enjoying the rewards of his piety and erudition, in the smiles of an approving conscience, and in the plaudits of good men. Perkins, of Massachusetts, is now pushing that wonderful invention, the steam engine, to the utmost verge of perfection. Many of our enterprising youth are now traversing sea and land in the pursuit of science—some are seated in the celebrated schools of medicine and natural science—some are in the great cities examining the fabrics of art, the machinery and processes of manufacturing—the movements and evolutions of commerce, and the complex relations of political economy. Others are moving in various directions, improving their information in agriculture, their taste in the fine arts, and adding to their knowledge of men and things. A late writer* mentions that at a popular point of his tour in Switzerland, it appeared from a register which he consulted, that even in that sequestered region the proportion of American travellers was respectable.

The revolution in navigation is the most astonishing portion of history. Wherever great communica-

* Simond.

tions can be maintained by water, the seats of commerce and navigation, of dense population and extensive dominion, will be established at those places. Before the discovery of the magnet, navigation was generally within sight of land. Who does not smile when he reads of the ten years' wanderings and sufferings of Ulysses from Ilium, in Asia Minor, to the little island of Ithaca, which within a few years has been taken possession of by a British sergeant and his guard,* and of the terrific and appalling adventures of the pious Æneas in a voyage from the former place to Italy? If an epic poem were now written, conceived by the sublime genius of Homer, and matured by the embellished taste and correct judgment of Virgil, describing in "thoughts that breathe and words that burn,"† the voyage of a hero, full of emprise and pregnant with danger, from the city of New York to the Island of St. Domingo, or the mouth of the Mississippi, (the full distance of the progress of Ulysses and Æneas,) although it might be sustained by all the interest arising from important episodes and preternatural machinery, yet the essence of the poem would be so absurd that no genius or management could protect it from the hue and cry of universal contempt. The Mediterranean sea was the *locus* of ancient navigation, and on its borders sprung up in succession, the four great monarchies—the Assyrian, the Persian, the Grecian and the Roman: and "all our religion—almost all our law—almost all our arts—almost all that sets us above savages, have come to us from the shores of the Mediterranean."‡ The mariner's compass has opened the gates of the great oceans, and the enterprising spirit, formerly imprisoned in a small space, has spread over the globe, carrying with it the riches of commerce and the refinements of knowledge. A voyage to Europe is now considered an excursion of pleasure: a voyage to China is viewed as a common occurrence, and even a voyage of circumnavigation round the globe, which was formerly contemplat-

* Hobhouse's Travels.

† Gray.

‡ Dr. Johnson.

ed with more apprehension than all the labors of Hercules, passes without much observation. This spirit has extended to all modes of travelling and all objects of discovery. The application of steam to the propulsion of boats—the establishment of swift packets—the improvement of natural and the creation of artificial water-courses, have produced the approximation of remote places and substituted contiguity in lieu of distance. In former times, and within the recollection of some who hear me, a voyage to Oswego, or a journey to Niagara, was considered a difficult and bold enterprise, and the Island of Michillimackinack was viewed as the *ultima Thule* of America. All parts of the world are now explored by American enterprise: and if we reap so nobly the fruits of our industry and capacity in exertions abroad, a much more extensive harvest of glory remains for our operations at home.

[Mr. Clinton here made some remarks upon the natural sciences, which are omitted.]

Time will scarcely permit even a short allusion to the exact sciences, agriculture and the mechanic arts, polite literature, the fine arts, and political philosophy: all of which open subjects of the most interesting character, that bear directly upon the general welfare; and all of them present the strongest incentives to the love of fame,* which is the great principle of the noble mind, and the last that it resigns. It is a common remark, that “*nihil dictum quod non dictum prius*,” and some are even so absurd as to suppose, that the stock of original ideas is exhausted. Much, no doubt, has been anticipated, but it is equally true, that much remains untouched and unnoticed. Some of the greatest discoveries have been so contemporaneous, that it has been impossible to establish a charge of plagiarism. Many ideas are original, as it respects the author, and yet are not new: in which case the conception is more vivid, and the impression more powerful, than when of a derivative character. The infinite combinations of which the mind is susceptible—the lights and shades

* Tacitus.

which the imagination can cast upon all subjects, and the powerful action of the understanding, in measuring the relations of ideas—in surveying the constitutions of things—in penetrating the secrets of nature, and developing the properties of mind and matter, furnish conclusive evidence of the progressive improvement of our faculties, and of their capacity to elicit new ideas on all subjects, and to make discoveries of all kinds. Some inventions are the offspring of accident, as gunpowder, printing, and the mariner's compass. Others, are the result of a happy impulse. Some assume maturity at the first inception, like Pallas, who sprung from the head of Jove, completely armed with the panoply of wisdom. While most discoveries have proceeded gradually to perfection, like our majestic Hudson; which, although small in its origin, yet, by the addition of fresh streams in its career to the ocean, becomes at last able to bear ships of the greatest burden. We are as prone to shoot beyond as to shoot short of the mark; and nothing is more pernicious to the discovery of truth, than a refining and sophisticating spirit, which infects every subject with its perverse and diminutive views. An illustrious writer* has well observed, that “men are accustomed to take a prospect of nature from some high tower, to view her at a distance, and to be too much absorbed in generalities. Whereas, if they would vouchsafe to descend, approach nearer to particulars, and more exactly and considerately look into things themselves, there might be a more true and valuable comprehension and discovery.” And let it be understood, “that the wonders of nature lie out of the high road and beaten paths, so that the very absurdity of an attempt may sometimes be felicitous.”† The mind, matured by deep and continual meditation—enlightened by wise and learned conversation—and fertilized by judicious and extensive reading, resembles that splendid metal which was formed from the fusion of many minerals in the great conflagration at Corinth. Like

* Bacon.

† Ibid.

the crucible of the alchymist, it will indeed aspire to creative power: like the deflagrator and the galvanic battery, it pursues nature into the most occult recesses; and tortures her into a confession of her most important secrets; and like the poet's eye, it glances from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven, and as imagination bodies forth the forms of things unknown, turns them to shape, and gives to airy nothing a local habitation and a name.*

Let us then be vigilant and active in the great and holy cause of knowledge. The field of glory stretches before you in wide expanse. Untrodden heights and unknown lands surround you. Waste not, however, your energies on subjects of a frivolous nature, of useless curiosity, or impracticable attainment. Books have been multiplied to designate the writer of Junius—the Man in the Iron Mask has exercised the inquisitorial attention of Europe—and perpetual motion, the philosopher's stone, and the immortal elixir, have destroyed the lives and fortunes of thousands. Genuine philosophy has sometimes its aberrations, and like the Spartan king or Roman emperor, mingles in the amusements of children. The sceptre of science is too often surrounded by toys and baubles, and even Linnæus condescended to amuse his fancy with the creation of vegetable dials and oriental pearls. Innovation without improvement, and experiments without discoveries, are the rocks on which ingenuity is too often shipwrecked.

“*Omne ignotum pro magnifico*,”† said the profound historian of Rome. Wonder is the child of ignorance, and vanity the offspring of imbecility. Let us be astonished at nothing but our own apathy, and cease to be vain even of our virtues. The fragrance of the humble lily of the valley, and of the retiring eglantine of the woods, is more grateful to genuine taste, than the expressed odor of the queen of flowers, or the most costly products of the chemical alembic.

In our literary pursuits, let us equally reject a blind

* Shakspeare.

† Tacitus.

credulity that believes every fable, and a universal pyrrhonism that repudiates all truths—a canine appetite, which devours every thing, however light, and digests nothing, however alimentary—and a fastidious taste, which delights not in the nutritious viand, but seeks its gratification in the aromatic desert.

The waters of ancient learning ought to be drunk at the fountain head in preference to the streams. We are too prone to rely on references, quotations, abridgments and translations. The consequence is, that the meaning of the original frequently reaches us in a perverted or erroneous shape—its ethereal spirit evaporates by a change of conveyance, and we lose our acquaintance with the learned languages. A fault equally common, and more humiliating, is an idolatrous veneration for the literary men of Europe. This intellectual vassalage has been visited by high-toned arrogance and malignant vituperation. Harmless indeed is the calumny, and it recoils from the object like the javelin thrown by the feeble hand of old Priam; but it ought to combine with other inducements to encourage a vernacular literature, and to cause us to bestow our patronage upon more meritorious works of our own country. We have writers of genius and erudition, who form a respectable profession. Some have ascended the empyreal heights of poesy, and have gathered the laurel wreaths of genius; others have trodden the enchanted ground of fictitious narrative, and have been honored by the tears of beauty and the smiles of virtue. While several have unfolded the principles of science, literature, philosophy, jurisprudence and theology, and have exalted the intellectual glory of America; let us cherish the hope, that some at least will devote their faculties to improve those arts and sciences on which the substantial interests of our country so greatly depend. I refer particularly to agriculture, civil engineering, and naval architecture. Let us also trust that some vigorous minds will apply their powers to the illustration of our history. It has been said, with more point than truth, that the annals of modern colonies afford but two me-

memorable events—the foundation, and the separation from the parent country.* If this observation had been so qualified as to refer to those occurrences as the most memorable, not as the only memorable events, it would undoubtedly have been correct. The colonial history of New York, although imperfectly executed, and brought down only to 1732, is fertile of instruction and replete with interest. The translations of the erudite *Vanderkemp*, and the collections of the Historical Society of New York, have furnished the most ample materials; and whenever it is given to the world by a master hand, it will be a complete refutation of the remark which I have quoted. Is it too much to say, that we have no good history of the United States, and that the best account of our independence is written by Botta, an Italian? At this moment, a respectable mechanic of the city of London is collecting materials for writing our history. He is favorably noticed by distinguished members of parliament; and although his mind has not been disciplined by a liberal education, yet its productions display vigorous and cultivated powers. Let this stimulate us to similar and animated exertions, and let not our writers despair of ultimate success, even if their efforts are attended with partial failures. Experience certainly brightens the vista of futurity; but they must expect that their fate will be determined sooner or later by intrinsic merit. Those writings that emit no effulgence, and communicate no information, will fall still-born from the press, and plunge at once into the abyss of obscurity. Others again will dazzle as they glide rapidly over the literary horizon, and be seen no more. Some, after basking in the meridian sunshine, will gradually undergo a temporary eclipse; but time will dispense justice, and restore their original splendor.

So sinks the day-star in the ocean's bed,
And yet anon repairs his drooping head,

* Humboldt.

And tricks his beams, and with new-spangled ore,
Flames in the fore-head of the morning sky.*

A fortunate few are always in the full blaze of sublime glory. They are the phoenixes of the age—the elect of genius, and the favorites of nature and of heaven.

There is nothing “under heaven’s wide hollow-ness,”† which does not furnish aliment for the mind. All that we observe by the organs of sense, and all that we perceive by the operations of the understanding—all that we contemplate in retrospect, at the present or in the future, may be compounded or decomposed in the intellectual laboratory, for beneficial purposes. The active mind is always vigilant, always observing. The original images which are created by a vivid imagination—the useful ideas which are called up by memory, and the vigorous advances of the reasoning power into the regions of disquisition and investigation, furnish full employment for the most powerful mind; and after it is fully stored with all the productions of knowledge, then the intellect has to employ its most important functions in digesting and arranging the vast and splendid materials. And if there be any thing in this world which can administer pure delight, it is when we summon our intellectual resources, rally our mental powers, and proceed to the investigation of a subject distinguished for its importance and complexity, and its influence on the destinies of man.

If science were to assume a visible form, like the fabled muses of the ancient mythology, all men would be ready to exclaim with the poet—

——— Her angel’s face,
As the great eye of heaven shined bright,
And made a sunshine in a shady place;
Did never mortal eye behold such heavenly grace.‡

But, alas! it is a blessing not without its alloy. Its sedentary occupations, and its severe exercises of the

* Milton.

† Spenser.

‡ Spenser.

mind, impair the health, and hypochondria, the Prometheus vulture of the student, poisons for a time all the sources of enjoyment. Add to this, the tortures of hope deferred, and of expectation disappointed. After nights without sleep, and days without repose, in the pursuit of a favorite investigation—after tasking the mind, and stretching all its faculties to the utmost extent of exertion, when the golden vision of approaching fame dazzles the eye in the distance, and the hand is extended to taste the fruit and to reap the harvest, the airy castles, the gorgeous palaces of the imagination, vanish like enchanted ground, and disappear like the baseless fabric of a vision.

From such perversities of fortune, the sunshine of comfort may, however, be extracted. In the failure of a scientific investigation, collateral discoveries of great moment have been made. And as an eminent philosopher* has well remarked, “What succeeds, pleaseth more, but what succeeds not, many times informs no less.” And in the worst position, the mind is improved, sharpened, expanded, brightened and strengthened by the processes which it has undergone, and the elaborations which it has experienced.

We must not then expect
A perpetual feast of nectar'd sweets,
Where no crude surfeit reigns.†

But we may confidently pronounce, that a cornucopia of blessings will attend the diffusion of knowledge—that it will have an electrifying effect on all the sources of individual happiness and public prosperity—that glory will follow in the train of its felicitous cultivation, and that the public esteem, in perennial dispensation, will crown its votaries.

This state enjoys a temperate climate and a fruitful soil, and situate between the great lakes on the north and west, and the ocean on the south and east, ought always to be the seat of plenty and salubrity. It re-

* Bacon.

† Milton.

quires nothing but the enlightened evolution of its faculties and resources to realize the beau-ideal of perfection : and the co-operation of man with the bounty of Providence, will render it a terrestrial paradise. And this must be effected through the agency of intellectual, operating on physical exertion.

In this grand career of mind, in this potent effort of science, in this illustrious display of patriotism, contributions will flow in from all quarters. The humble mite will be acceptable as well as the golden talent. And the discriminating, perspicacious and comprehensive eye of intellect will find

Tongues in trees ; books in the running brooks ;
Sermons in stipes ; and good in every thing.*

Indeed, the very ground on which we stand affords topics for important consideration and useful application. This city was among the earliest seats of European settlement. It was at the head of a great portage, reaching from the termination of the navigable waters of the west to the head waters of the Hudson. It was the great entrepot of the valuable trade in furs and peltries, and the thoroughfare of commercial adventures, of scientific explorations, and of military expeditions. In 1690, it was destroyed by an eruption of French and Indians—the lives of many of its inhabitants were saved as it were by a special interposition of Providence. And the sympathizing and pathetic speech of the faithful Mohawks, on that melancholy occasion, may be ranked among the most splendid effusions of oratory.† The alluvial lands of the river, rich as the soil formed by the overflowings of the Nile, were the principal residence of that ferocious and martial race, the true old heads of the Iroquois—a confederacy which carried terror, havoc and desolation from the Gulf of St. Lawrence to the Gulf of Mexico ; and which aspired to universal empire over the

* Shakspeare.

† Colden's History of the Five Nations,

savage nations. How astonished would that people be, if they could be summoned to life, to witness the flowing of the waters of the west through this place, seeking in a navigable shape, a new route to the Atlantic Ocean—carrying on their bosom the congregated products of nature and art, and spreading as they proceed, wealth and prosperity.

All alluvial ground formed by streams emanating from a distance and reinforced in their transit by auxiliary waters, must be fertile not only in soil, but abundant in the various productions of the vegetable kingdom. The germs of plants will be transported from remote quarters; and the gorges and ravines, formed in many places by intersecting streams, will not only protect particular spots from the ravages of the plow, but open the treasures of the mineral kingdom by the profound excavations of the water and the transportation of distant fossils. Here, then, is a proper region for interesting discovery. Strange trees now flourish on the banks of the river; many a flower is born to blush unseen, and many a curious production has never undergone scientific scrutiny.

Here has been established a great seminary of education, which in less than thirty years has risen to an extraordinary altitude of excellence; which unites the ardor of youthful enthusiasm with the wisdom of experienced longevity and the celebrity of confirmed usefulness—and which, by an able diffusion of the light of knowledge and a dexterous management of the helm of government, has already produced scholars who adorn and illumine the walks of science and literature—the pursuits of professional life, and the councils of our country.

In this vicinity flourished Sir William Johnson, one of the extraordinary characters of our colonial history. He settled near the banks of the Mohawk, and from humble beginnings he acquired great celebrity, particularly in war—immense wealth, and the favor of his sovereign. Auspicious events in concurrence with a paramount influence over the Indians, and great energy

of character, laid the foundation and erected the superstructure of his fortunes. In this place lived and died that eminent servant of God, the Rev. Dr. Romeyn, the fragrance of whose virtues is still cherished in your hearts and felt in your lives. His venerable form—his dignified deportment—his eye beaming goodness, and his voice uttering wisdom, are still fresh in your minds; so impressive is the power of combined virtue and intelligence. Dr. Dwight, the greatest theologian of the age, has pronounced his eulogium; and it remains for biography to perform its functions, and to fill up the outlines so ably drawn by one of the most acute observers and profound thinkers which our country has produced.*

Finally, whatever may be our thoughts, our words, our writings, or our actions, let them all be subservient to the promotion of science and the prosperity of our country. Pleasure is a shadow; wealth is vanity, and power a pageant—but knowledge is extatic in enjoyment, perennial in fame, unlimited in space, and infinite in duration. In the performance of its sacred offices, it fears no danger, spares no expense, omits no exertion. It scales the mountain, looks into the volcano, dives into the ocean, perforates the earth, wings its flight into the skies, encircles the globe, explores sea and land, contemplates the distant, examines the minute, comprehends the great, and ascends to the sublime. No place too remote for its grasp—no heavens too exalted for its reach. "Its seat is the bosom of God—its voice the harmony of the world. All things in heaven and earth do it homage, the very least as feeling its care, and the greatest as not exempt from its power. Both angels and men and creatures, of what condition soever, though each in different sort and manner, yet all, with uniform consent, admiring it as the parent of peace and happiness."†

* Dwight's Travels.

† Hooker.



3 2044 090 126 194

